Vol 6 The War Illustrated N° 136

Edited by Sir John Hammerton

6d FORTNIGHTLY SEPTEMBER 4, 1942

CURTISS COMMANDO, already in mass production in America, is a 25-ton transport 'plane. This aircraft carries infantry, light artillery and one or more Jeeps, its purpose being to speed up reinforcements. The Curtiss Commando is the largest twin-engined military 'plane in the world, and has a wing span of 108 feet. In the foreground are seen three Jeep cars lined up behind a column of U.S. infantrymen, waiting to file into the aircraft. The cars are driven into the cabin by means of special ramps. *Photo, Associated Press*

ALONG THE BATTLE FRONTS

by Our Military Critic, Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

In the first half of August the deterioration in the general situation, so alarming at the end of July, continued, but at a slackening pace and less widespread. In Russia, though the Germans made deep thrusts in certain directions these did not immediately threaten vital points, and where the danger was greatest Russian resistance showed distinct signs of stiffening. It was, in fact, so firm that the Germans were compelled to seek new methods of overcoming it, widening their front of attack. That may make heavy demands on their resources and communications, but it had, combined with unsparing use of reserves, a measure of success which, by the middle of the month, again made the situation, especially on the Stalingrad front, critical in the extreme. Although the Russians made successful counter-attacks at various points there was little indication that they intended to attempt a counter-offensive on a scale which might materially affect the issue.

In Egypt the lull in the land battle was maintained—each side strengthening its defensive position while accumulating resources for offensive action. Little change in the situation therefore occurred.

It was in the Far East that the situation developed in a definitely encouraging manner with the Allied attack on the Japanese base in the Solomons. The operation strategically was defensive in nature, but it provided proof of the growing offensive power of the Allies and of the inherent weakness of the widely-dispersed Japanese positions with their vulnerable lines of communication.

Reduction in Allied shipping losses, which had for months reached alarming figures, is also encouraging, although as yet it is somewhat uncertain whether the reduction is due to redispositions of the enemy's attack or to undoubtedly improved results obtained from the Allied defensive and offensive measures. Reduction in losses must be maintained over a longer period before it is safe to draw definite conclusions.

RUSSIA During the period under review undoubtedly the most encouraging feature in the Russian situation was the magnificent defence made by the Army protecting the approaches to Stalingrad against an ever-increasing weight of German attacks. In the elbow of the Don between Kletskaya and Kalach, where the German attempt to reach Stalingrad first opened, fighting was continuous and of ever-increasing intensity with heavy losses in men and material on both sides. The Germans, since they overran the Donetz basin, have had the use of the railway connecting it with Stalingrad, and such damage as it sustained has no doubt been made good and its gauge altered by now. It must contribute largely towards maintaining the vigour of the German offensive. In spite of this advantage the Germans made little progress within the Don elbow until the middle of the month, when they gained a footing on the west bank of the river south of Kletskaya from which counter-attacks failed to dislodge them.

Early in August another serious threat to Stalingrad developed. The Germans, having at last succeeded in extending their bridgehead at Tsimlyanskaya to the south-east, secured possession of Kotelnikovo on the Rostov-Stalingrad railway. From there they attempted to advance north-eastwards, directly threatening Stalingrad and the communications of the Russians fighting west of the Don at Kalach. The threat was all the more serious because the Rostov railway west of Kotelnikovo was by now in German hands and available as a new line of communication. Russian defence was, however, again stubborn and the advance was soon brought to a standstill. Fierce battles in which armour was extensively used followed, again with heavy losses on both sides; but the defence held firm, counter-attacking vigorously.

Checked in this north-easterly drive, the Germans, about the middle of August, started a new thrust eastwards up the valley of the Sal river; though whether this was intended to swing north towards Stalingrad, to continue eastwards towards Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga, or to make for a point farther south on the Caspian coast was not apparent. Whichever line was taken the thrust was a new danger. On the Volga front there was therefore, about the middle of August, an alarming deterioration of the situation, although the Germans had been compelled to throw in many reserves and to extend their front into an area where railway communications were lacking.

MAIN GERMAN THRUSTS are here shown directed against Stalingrad and south into the Caucasus. On August 17 it was announced that the Russians had abandoned Maikop after destroying the oil wells. *By courtesy of The Daily Telegraph*

On the Caucasus front the Germans had not been definitely checked, though their claims to have taken Maikop and Krasnodar were made prematurely. Fighting continued in both places long after the claims were made, and when Maikop was finally evacuated on August 16 the scorched earth policy was carried out effectively. The German drive in the Caucasus, by the middle of August appeared to pursue two distinct objects after it had reached the oil centres of Maikop and Krasnodar. In the west the capture of the naval bases at Novorossisk and Tuapse appeared to be the immediate object. This entailed an attempt to cut off the extreme left wing of Timoshenko's army, which had clung to its position in the Azov coast region south-west of Rostov. Threatened with encirclement this force appears to have made good its retreat, partly by sea, to the mouth of the Kuban river, where it could reinforce the troops defending the lower reaches of the river to cover Novorossisk. The Germans also made desperate attempts to cross the Kuban in the Krasnodar region from which the railway runs to Novorossisk, but they met stubborn resistance. From Maikop their advance along the railway to Tuapse was also checked.

It is evident that the Germans attach special importance to the elimination of the Black Sea fleet, presumably because they need sea communications to ease their transport difficulties. Till sea transport can be used heavy plant to repair damage to the oil-fields is not likely to be available, and such oil as may be obtained from the Maikop and Grozny oil-fields can hardly reach Germany over railways congested with military traffic. Germany may have sufficient oil for her military needs, but it is badly needed to maintain the economic life of Germany and occupied countries. The Black Sea fleet, while it can remain in action, also, of course, prohibits any amphibious attempt against Trans-Caucasia, and it is interesting to note that no attempt has been made even to cross the Straits of Kerch.

The other half of the Caucasian drive is mainly directed south-eastwards. From Armavir a panzer thrust penetrated far up the valley of the Upper Kuban, from which a road crosses the mountains to the Black Sea at Sukhum. This thrust reached Cherkessk, where it was checked, but whether it was an attempt to cross the Caucasus seems doubtful, because the Rostov-Baku railway is clearly the line by which a major attempt to invade Trans-Caucasia or to reach the shores of the Caspian must be made. On this line panzer troops reached Mineralniye Vody in the Caspian watershed. From there they threatened the Grozny oil-fields, and the northern end, at Ordzhonikidze, of the military road which crosses the mountains. This road, which rises to 8,000 feet and might easily be demolished, is not of importance as an avenue of invasion, but it would provide communication for a Russian force on the flank of an advance to Baku. In the Terek Valley, up which the road starts, is one of the richest deposits of manganese ore in the world, which, since Germany is in desperate need of the mineral, may be an incidental objective.

On the whole, it would seem, the main German objects are: to secure control of the Volga in order to interrupt Russian oil supplies, and to eliminate the obstacle the Black Sea fleet presents to the development of sea-communications. I do not believe the Germans will dissipate their strength in attempting a major invasion of Transcaucasia till these objects are attained.

IN THE DON RIVER AREA lies some of the richest agricultural land of the U.S.S.R. The Kursk and Voronezh provinces had nearly 30,000,000 acres under cultivation, and although much of the gigantic harvest may have been gathered and removed eastwards before the enemy reached it, this photograph of von Bock's troops moving through a wheat-field proves that this was not achieved everywhere. *Photo, Keystone*

They may push on towards the Caspian coast, from which air attacks might seriously interfere with Russian sea communications carrying oil and Allied munitions from Iran.

Except on the Volga and Caucasian fronts, the Germans are definitely on the defensive, and are hard pressed at Voronezh, Briansk and in the Rzhev region. The Russian attacks, though vigorous, are not in the nature of a major offensive. They are presumably designed to exhaust German resources, prevent the transference of formations to the main theatre, and possibly to prepare the way for offensive action on a major scale.

EGYPT ..... On land up to the middle of August no event of importance occurred in Egypt, but signs were not lacking that both sides were preparing intensively for operations.

Allied air forces, including American squadrons, maintained constant attacks on the enemy's land and sea communications. In particular, by sinking barges conveying material to Mersa Matruh they must have inflicted much damage and delayed Rommel's preparations.

During the lull our troops have had much better opportunities for rest and recuperation than those of the enemy, which may prove an important factor.

The event of most strategic importance at that time in the Mediterranean theatre was the arrival of yet another convoy at Malta. The price paid was heavy, but the scale of the enemy's attempts to destroy the convoy, and the continued costly attacks on the island, are clear indications of the important offensive role Malta is playing.

TULAGI, vital objective in the Solomon Islands from which U.S. forces seek to expel the Japanese, provided a strategic starting-point for enemy raids upon New Guinea and Australia. See also map p. 165.
By courtesy of The Daily Mail

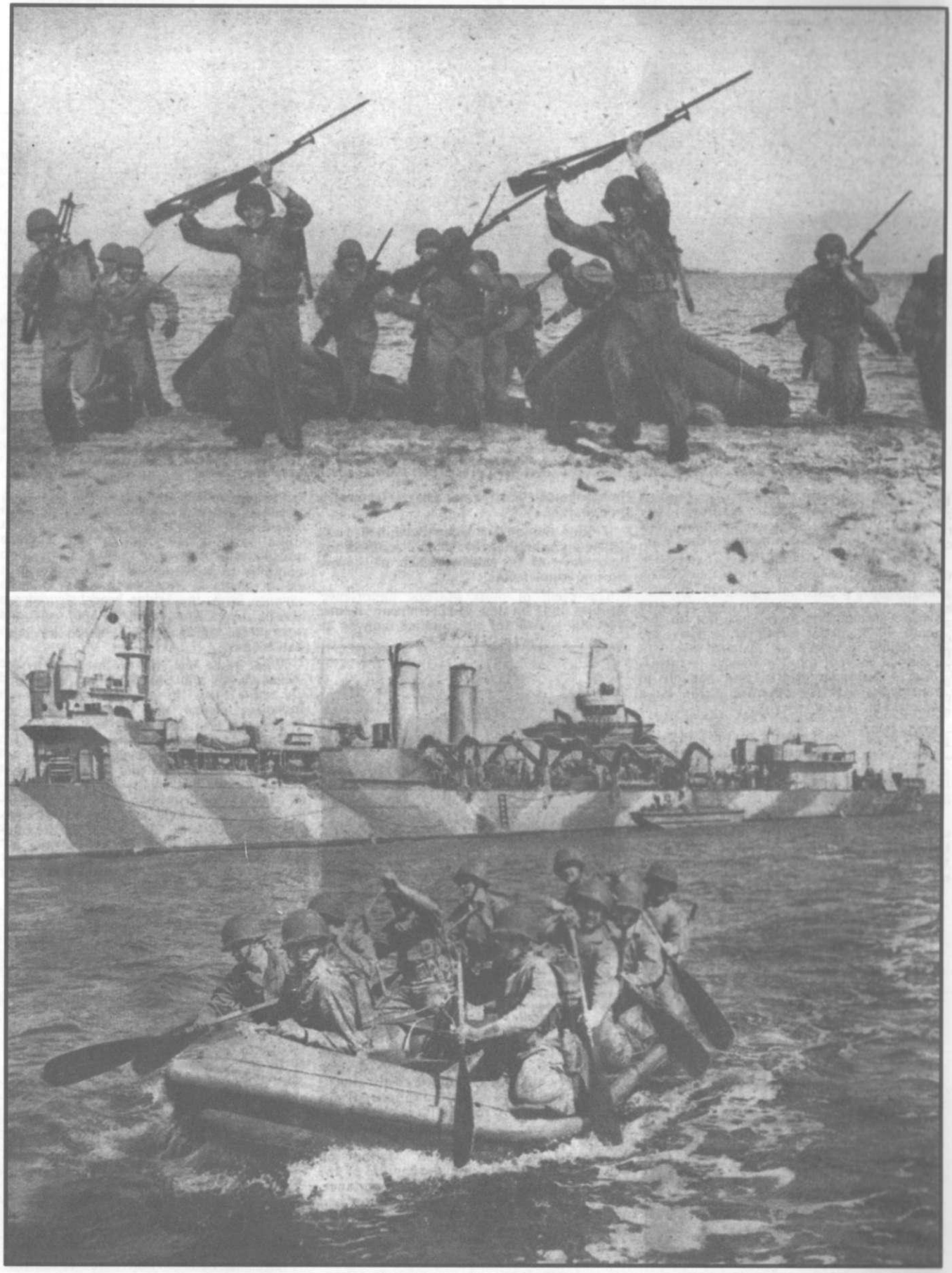
FAR EAST ..... The successful landing of American Marines on the Solomon Islands, and the capture of the enemy's air base there, is of first importance. It may be assumed that the operation had primarily a defensive strategic purpose, and aimed at depriving the Japanese of a spring-board from which further enterprises against New Caledonia, or even Australia, might start, and from which communications between the U.S.A. and Australia could be attacked. The primary object has already been attained, but it may be some time before a secondary, though no less important, object is achieved—the establishment of an Allied base for offensive purposes. That object cannot be achieved till Japanese resistance is overcome, and it is likely to continue to be stubborn. The deployment of an adequate offensive force in, and its advance from, the bridge heads secured are certain to be slow, difficult and expensive operations, especially until shore air bases can be used.

What price has had to be paid by the Allied navies will probably not be revealed for some time. It may be heavy, though Japanese claims are evidently fantastic. Japan has also had naval losses, and any attempts she may make to assist her garrison are likely to be increasingly costly. She has here, in New Guinea and in the Aleutians begun to pay the penalty for the dispersion of her forces—dispersion that, now that she is forced to adopt a defensive attitude, cannot be reduced. The Allies, on the other hand, are now able to concentrate for offensive blows; and each new air base secured will immensely facilitate and render less expensive the next step.

LIEUT.-GEN. W. H. E. GOTT, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., whose death was announced on August 11. General Gott was shot down while flying to Cairo on leave from the front.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

VICE-ADMIRAL R. GHORMLEY, C.-in-C. of the U.S.-New Zealand naval command, directs operations, under Admiral Nimitz, in the Solomon Islands. *New York Times Photos*

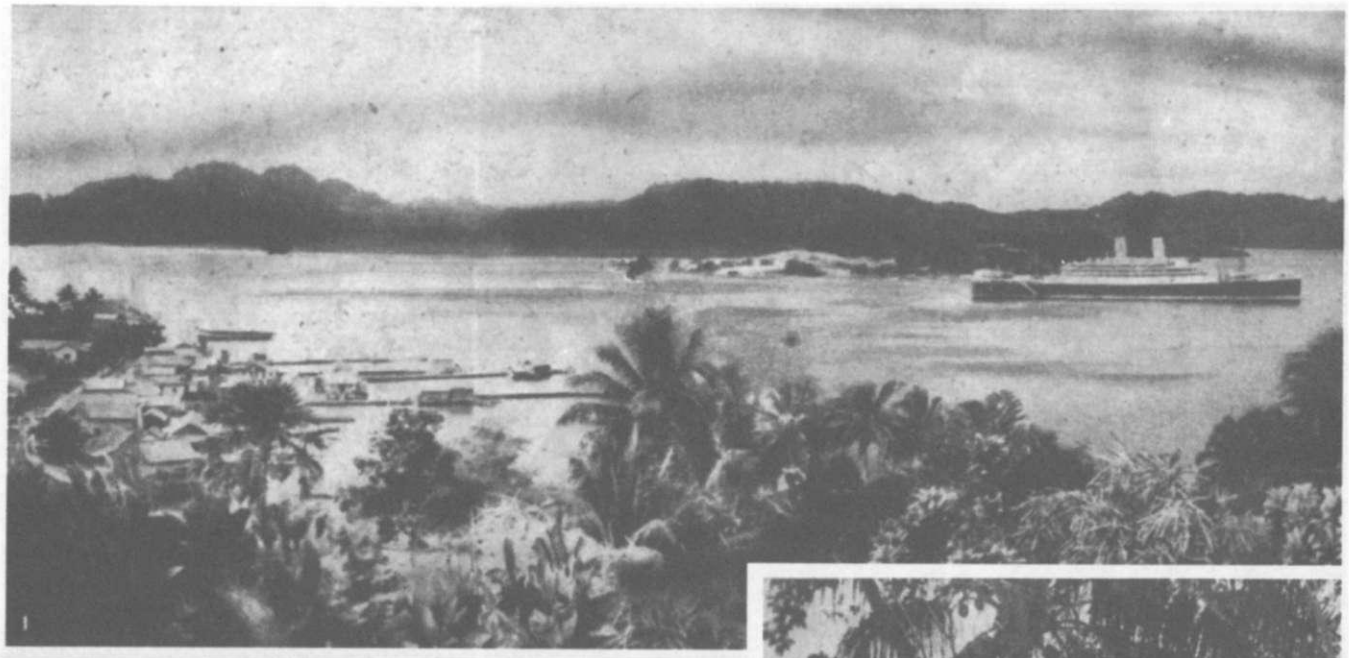
America's Famous 'Leathernecks' Go into Action

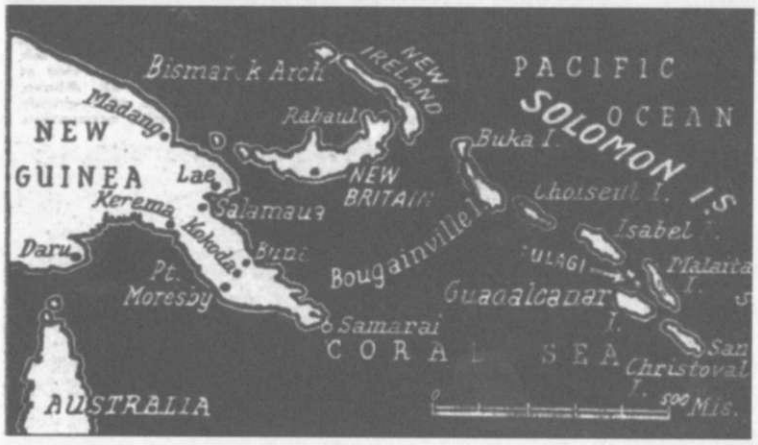


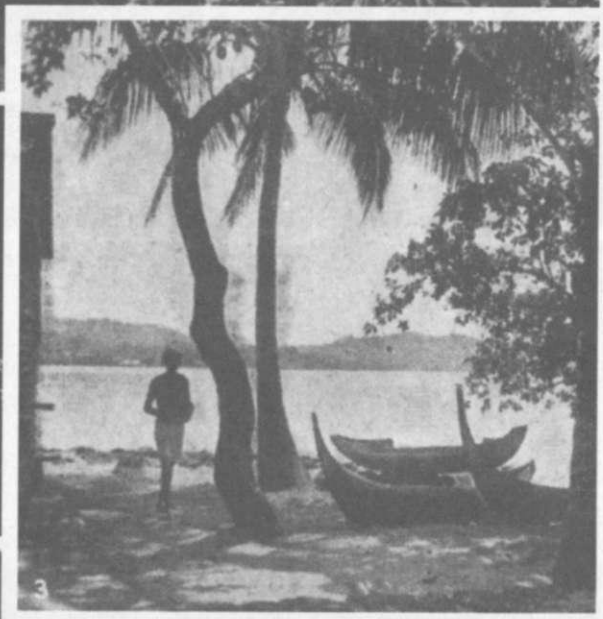
U.S. MARINES were stated on August 12 to have made successful landings on three islands in the Solomons Group, and by August 21 had occupied an important airfield and were consolidating and improving their positions. These photographs show men of this famous corps in training. Above, leaving the parent-ship in a rubber boat en route for the shore. Top, a landing effected, the assault troops advance to establish a beach-head.

Photos, Keystone, New York Times Photos

United Nations Attack in the South-West Pacific



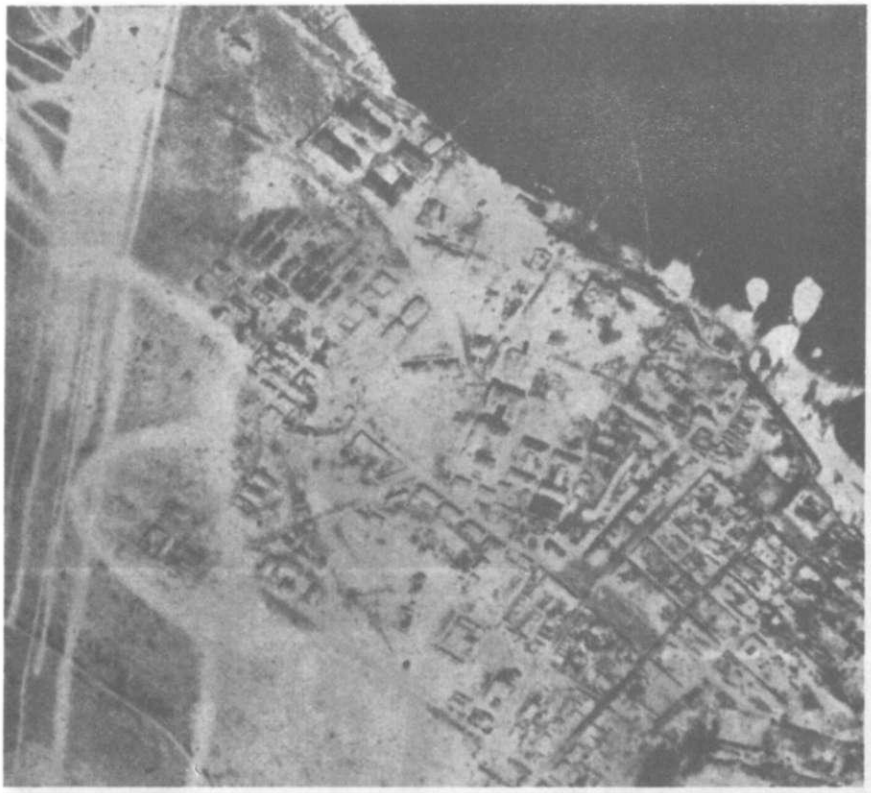




SOLOMON ISLANDS are now a crucial theatre of operations since Allied forces established bases there in August. 1. Tulagi, the scene of a landing by American forces. 2. Solomon Islands in relation to New Guinea and Australia. 3. View from Tulagi towards Makambo Island. 4. United Nations aircraft guards an Allied convoy near Port Moresby, New Guinea, and 5. Troops line up for inspection on arrival. Fighting continues in the Kokoda area of the island.

Photos, Black Star, E.N.A., Planet News. Map by courtesy of The Daily Mirror

Sweeney Todd of Tobruk Has No Customers Today



RAIDS ON TOBRUK have been made by R.A.F. bombers since its fall on June 21, and on the left three direct hits are being scored on two of the jetties during the night of July 9-10. Above, German ambulance car in front of a grimly humorous reminder of the British occupation.

HEROIC DEFENDERS OF TOBRUK who are now captives of the Axis. Among the units involved were elements of the 201st Guards (Motor) Brigade and the 32nd Army Tank Brigade; H.Q. 2nd South African Division, with the 4th and 6th South African Infantry Brigades; and the 11th Indian Infantry Brigade. There were also in the garrison units of medium A.A. and coastal defence, survey and searchlight artillery, and Royal Engineers, together with signal, service corps, and medical, ordnance, pay, pioneer and postal units, most of which were United Kingdom troops. Berlin claimed a total of 28,000 prisoners.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Associated Press

Hearty Welcome Back to the Aussies in Egypt

Australians recovering equipment from an Italian M 13 tank, one of many which were wrecked or abandoned in the fierce fighting west of El Alamein. It was in the Tel el Eisa area that Australian reinforcements were officially stated on July 12 to be in action, and to have advanced the British line by 5 miles. This infusion of fresh blood into the weary desert army proved an important factor in Gen. Auchinleck's stand at El Alamein.

Above and right, men of the Eighth Army in the El Alamein battle zone find among the Australian troops newly arrived in Egypt many old comrades with whom they had fought side by side in the earlier campaigns. The "Diggers" received an enthusiastic welcome, and many friendships were renewed.

In mid-August important changes were announced in the Middle East Command. Gen. Alexander succeeded Gen. Auchinleck as C.-in-C. Middle East; Lt.-Gen. Montgomery was appointed Commander of the 8th Army in succession to Gen. Ritchie, and Maj.-Gen. Lumsden became Commander of the 30th Corps in place of Lt.-Gen. Gott.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

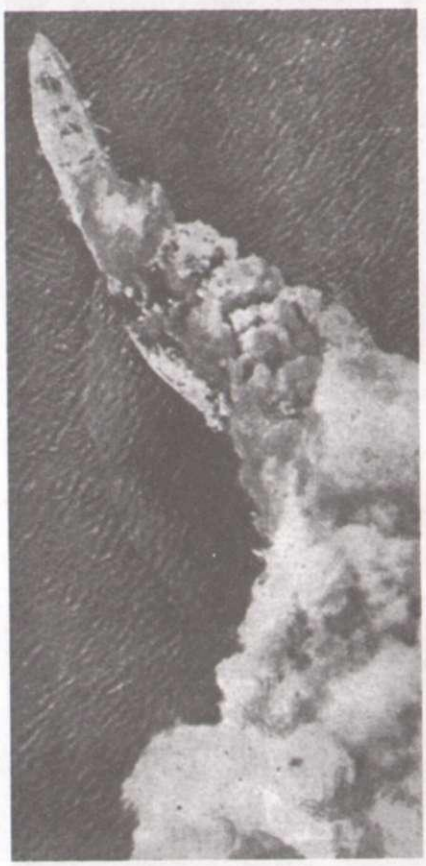
THE WAR IN THE AIR

by Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

IT can be truly said that the air war is world-wide. Great and important air actions have taken place over the Bay of Biscay, Western Europe, the Mediterranean, the Caucasus, among the tropic islands north of Australia, and in the Aleutian Islands of the North Pacific. In the spreading character of the air war there is evidence of the increasing air power of the United Nations ; no other explanation is possible. To those who believe —as I believe—that overwhelming air power is the key to ultimate victory, and that the door to peace is uncompromisingly barred until that key is forged, the events of the period here under review are of heartening trend, despite reverses in certain theatres of operations.

British reports on the air-sea battle which began in the Mediterranean on August 11 and ended with the arrival of the convoy at Malta three days later, make it clear that no greater battle between sea and air has been fought on the lines of communication during the three years of war.

H.M.S. Eagle, one of several aircraft-carriers included in the escort, was sunk by a U-boat the first day, and some of her fighters went down with her. About five hours later came the first enemy air attack. Bombers, torpedo-bombers and Stukas swarmed out from their bases in Sardinia and Sicily, but one attack after another was smashed either by our carrier fighters, which intercepted them out of sight, or by the tremendous barrage of shells from the naval and merchant ships. Losses were suffered in the convoy (*see* page 182), but it was known by the evening of Aug. 12 that 39 enemy aircraft had been destroyed that day. In the final stage of the operation, that of protecting the convoy in the Sicilian Channel, R.A.F. long-range fighters from Malta also took part and destroyed at least ten machines. The total number of enemy aircraft certainly destroyed during the whole operation by our fighters and A.A. gunfire was at least 66, while we lost eight, four of the pilots being safe.



AMERICAN BOMBER scores a direct hit on a Japanese transport off the Aleutian Islands. On August 12 it was reported that the enemy had lost 21 ships following heavy U.S. attacks.
Photo, Pictorial Press

WHILE our supply lines are almost entirely dependent upon surface ships there is no other way to munition Malta (which also requires to import a large proportion of its food). Malta is important as a fixed, forward air base. Its importance has increased since the withdrawal of the Eighth Army from Cyrenaica to El Alamein. From Maltese aerodromes we have bombed Southern Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia. Our attacks on Naples were made from Malta. And because Malta lies astride Axis lines of communication across the Mediterranean, it must play an important part in future Allied operations in North Africa ; and would be almost indispensable to any attempt to invade Southern Europe. It is an unsinkable aircraft carrier. It has defied air bombardment. It would be a costly operation to attempt to take it by storm. The Axis could make such an attempt only by air, as in Crete. But there can be no comparison between defence organization in Malta and the improvised defences in Crete. The Axis, mindful of the wastage they have suffered in aircraft, and by contrast, of growing Allied strength in the air, would like to reduce Malta by siege.

WING-CMDR. J. M. FULTON, D.F.C., A.F.C., reported missing after the R.A.F. raid on Hamburg on July 28. He is credited with some sixty important operations.
Photo, British Official

SEVEN thousand miles from Malta, on the Californian coast, Mr. Henry Kaiser is to begin the construction of 70-ton Martin Mars flying-boats for air transport use. Twenty per cent of American multi-motor aircraft to be built for the U.S. Army are to be air transports. The United Nations cannot expect to begin to enjoy the benefits of air transport in safety and speed until 1943 is well advanced. Until then the air-sea battles of the high seas and the narrow waters must continue unabated. The critical character of the current year was created, and is still maintained, as much by the initial lead in air strength possessed by the Axis as by any other factor. But in 1943 the pendulum will have begun to swing the other way.

In the meantime, I sympathise with Captain L. D. Macintosh, D.S.C., who commanded H.M.S. Eagle for a bare six weeks. Captain Macintosh (*see* portrait, p. 182) has been with the air arm of the Navy for many years. I remember him when he was an observer in the Fleet Air Arm, in the days when the operational methods of present-day carriers were being slowly evolved, with experimental flying and tactical exercises proceeding side by side, as an officer keenly conscious of the importance of the air side of the Navy's work.

Fierce air combats began over the waters of the Bay of Biscay on July 28. Over the wide bay, from off Brest south towards the north coast of Spain, landplanes and flying boats of the Coastal Command have patrolled with ceaseless care to spot and attack U-boats on passage in and out of the French western ports. Duels between the underwater craft and the aircraft have made it more difficult for German submarines to carry on their attacks against the Allied shipping lanes. The Marine section of the Luftwaffe was dispatched to the French zone to counter the activities of Coastal Command, in addition to the landplanes already there. First blood was drawn by an Australian squadron of Coastal Command, whose Sunderland flying boat shot a Messerschmitt 109 into the sea. A Wellington landplane shortly afterwards shot an Arado floatplane down and damaged another. Three Whitleys were attacked separately by Arados, but fought them off. More combats occurred on July 30 when a Sunderland shot down one of three floatplanes. A naval officer on board the Sunderland commented on the similarity between air and naval fighting tactics. On August 3 a Whitley was forced down on the sea by two Arados. Within five minutes another Whitley engaged the Arados and shot one down and drove the other off. Yet a third Whitley fought another Arado. On August 5 Coastal Command Beaufighters entered the Bay, shot down one Arado and damaged another. Since then the Bay has been quieter.

On August 8 United States naval forces assisted by U.S. and Australian aircraft, attacked the Japanese holding the Tulagi area in the Solomon Islands. Tulagi is the best naval anchorage in that area of the South Pacific. Contingent air attacks were made against the Japanese aircraft based in New Guinea, and at all aerodromes whence aid might be sent to the Japanese forces in the Solomon group. The air fighting continues. Simultaneously United States air forces attacked the Japanese base at Kiska in the Aleutian Islands of the North Pacific. Enemy transports were sunk in harbour, but fog made observations difficult. The operations are doubtless designed to prevent the Japanese movement towards Alaska via the Aleutian stepping stones across the ocean.

Air fighting was severe in Transcaucasia while the Germans advanced south-east and south from Rostov. Heavy losses in aircraft were claimed by both sides. Air fighting there was purely tactical.

The R.A.F. lost Wing-Commander John "Moose" Fulton, D.F.C., A.F.C., of Kamloops, British Columbia, when raiding Hamburg on July 28. He had flown on 60 operations, and was a brilliant leader.

ON July 30 Luftwaffe Ace Major Rudolph Pflanz scored his 51st claimed victory. Next day, when Bostons and Spitfires of Fighter Command raided the German fighter base at Abbeville they destroyed five F.W.190s and six Messerschmitt 109s ; in one of those German fighters Rudolph Pflanz was killed.

Bomber Command's main objectives during the first half of August were Düsseldorf, Duisburg-Ruhrort-Meiderich-Hamborn (three nights), Osnabrück, Mainz (two nights). These are all large industrial towns. A Czechoslovak squadron of Bomber Command celebrated its second anniversary on August 6.

One Fighter Command station has reached a total of 900 enemy aircraft destroyed. At the end of July Fighter Command had destroyed a total of 4,452 enemy aircraft in daylight actions. During July the Axis lost 424 aircraft over Britain, Western Europe, the Middle East, and to the Royal Navy ; the R.A.F. lost 432.

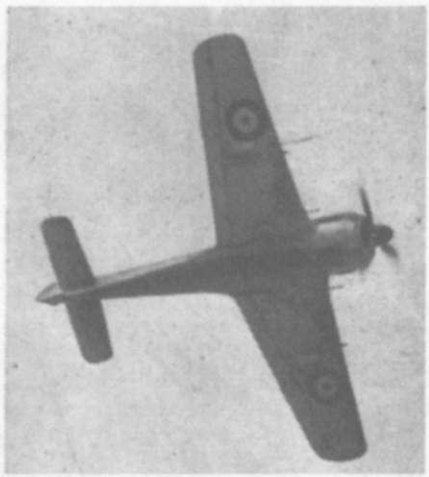
Captured Fighter Gives Away Luftwaffe's Secrets

Half-inch compressed steel protects the pilot's head from both rear and frontal attack, while the cockpit cover can be jettisoned in an emergency.

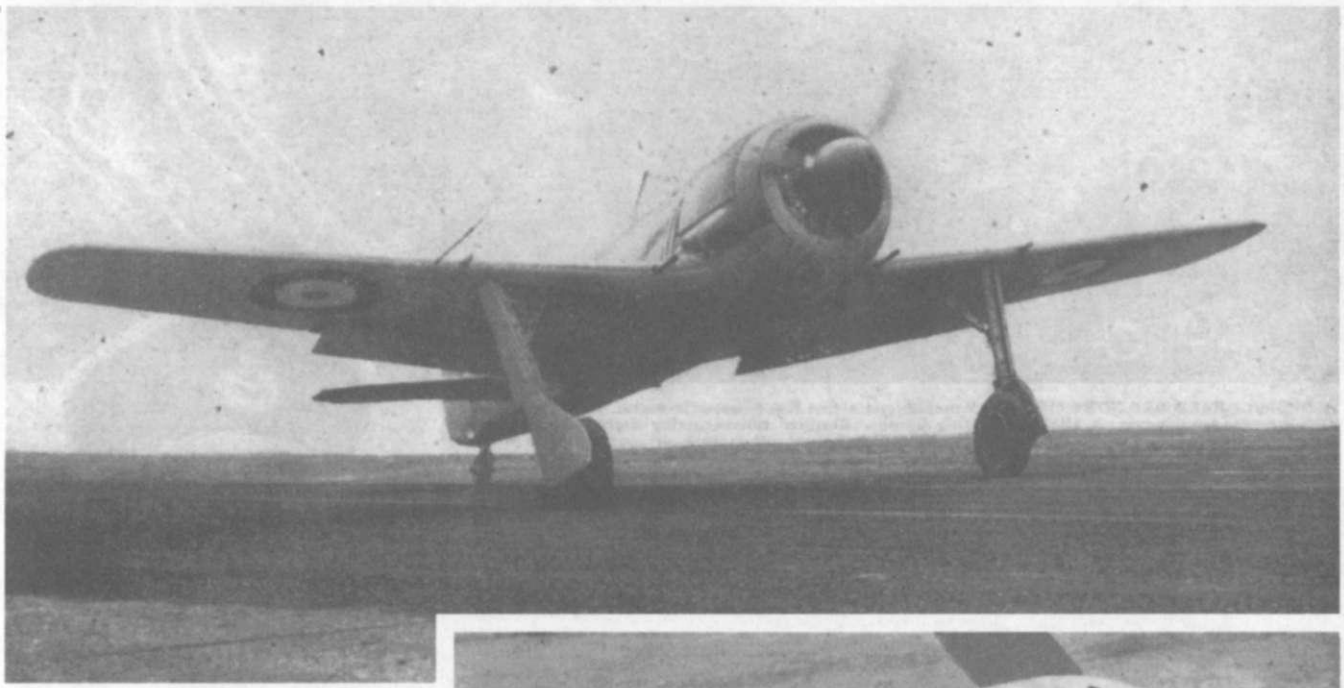
GERMANY'S latest single-seater fighter aircraft, the Focke-Wulf 190, whose secret was closely guarded by the enemy, has now yielded up any mysterious quality it may have once possessed. Flight tests have been carried out by R.A.F. pilots on one of these machines which was recently forced down on the South Coast of England. The 'plane was so little damaged that British experts were able to dismantle and examine it minutely.

The F.W. 190 has appeared as a fighter bomber in daylight raids over this country, and carried a bomb load similar to that of our Hurricane fighter bomber, though it is able to pack its load into one 550 lb. bomb as compared with the Hurricane's two of 250 lb. Its maximum speed, attained at 18,000 ft., is 375 m.p.h. and it possesses greater manoeuvrability than other German fighters. Armament consists of four 20 mm. cannon installed in the wings and two 7.92 mm. machine-guns mounted on top of the engine cowling (see illus. bottom, right), and firing through the air-screw arc with an interrupter gear. The cannon fire 60 rounds each.

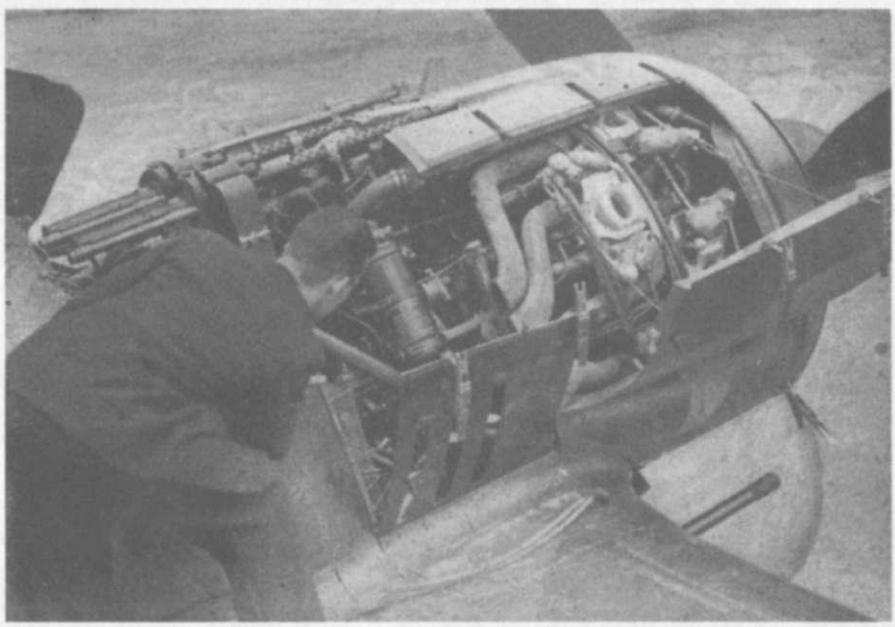
An outstanding feature is the master control ("Kommandeur") unit, relieving the pilot of many duties in the control of the engine, and providing against any mishandling on his part.



Possessing an extremely wide wing span and a finely tapered tail, the F.W.190 is seen in flight during one of its important R.A.F. tests.

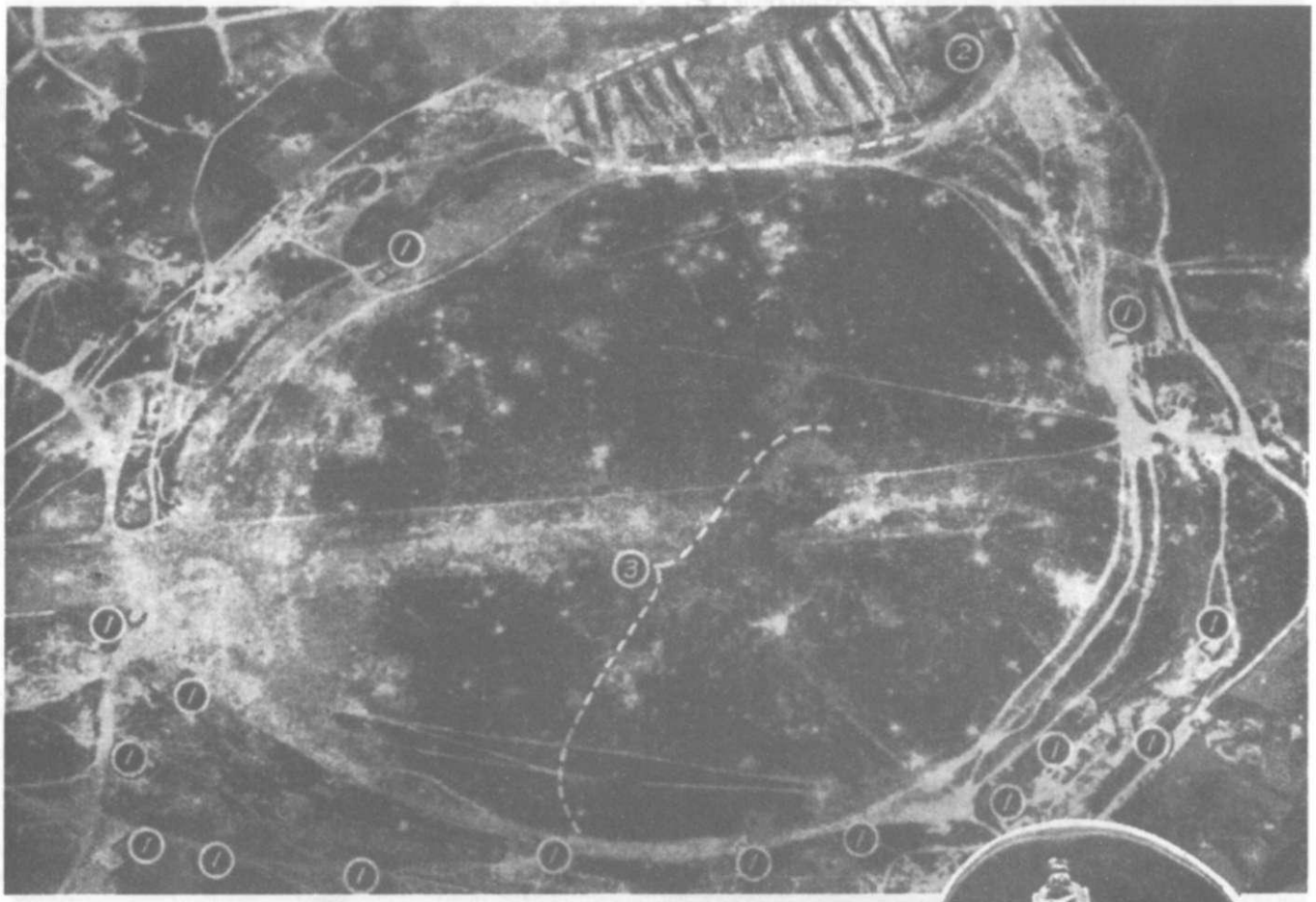


When the machine is in flight the wheels retract inwards into the wings. Here the 'plane is taxi-ing across the landing field after one of its trials.

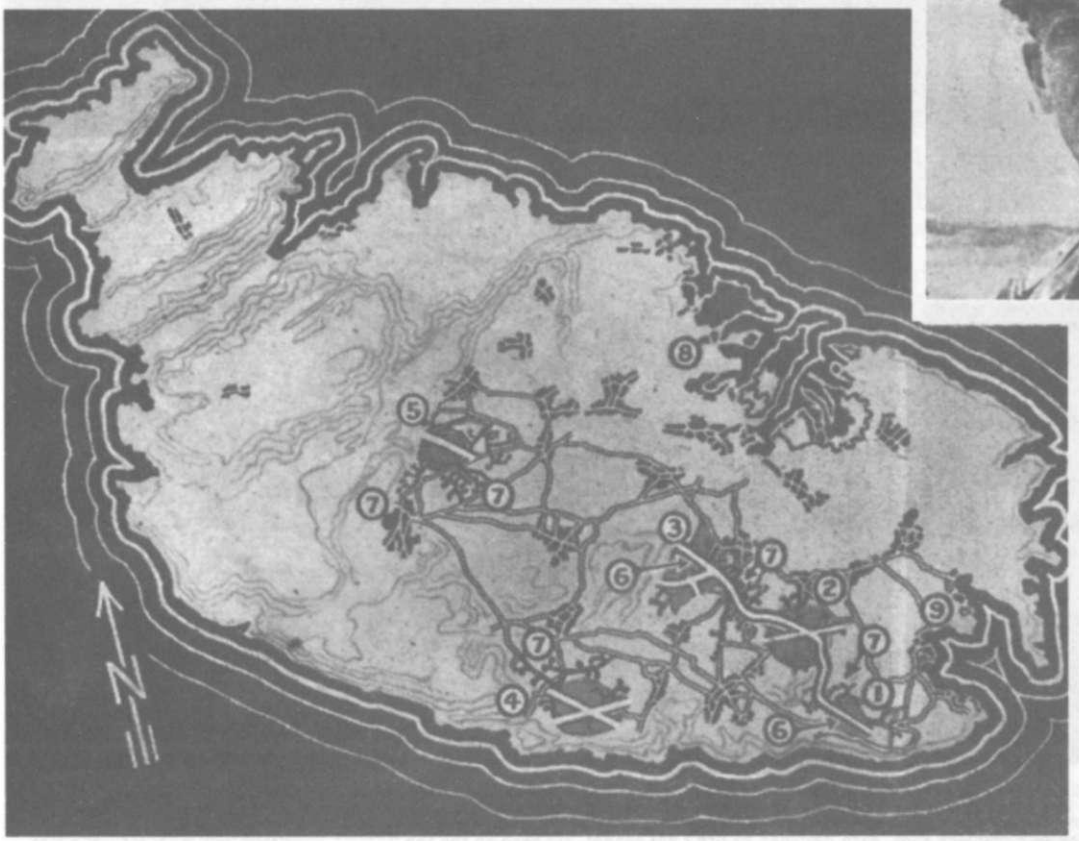


DEMOLITION OF THE AIRCRAFT in the event of a forced landing can be effected by detonating an explosive charge inside the fuselage. On the left is a warning to the pilot against touching the operating lever. The efficiency of the F.W. 190 largely depends on its compact and powerful engine (right). This is a B.M.W. 14-cylinder air-cooled radial of 1,530 h.p., fitted with a two-stage supercharger—a development of the American Pratt and Whitney engine. The two machine guns, each designed to fire 1,000 rounds, are seen on the top. *Photos, E.N.A., G.P.U., Keystone*

Malta is 'A Very Great Nuisance to the Axis'



BOMB-SCARRED AERODROME of Ta Venezia, one of the R.A.F. bases in Malta. 1, aircraft sheds; 2, subterranean hangars; 3, stick of bursting bombs. Despite the recurring damage done to their base, it is from Ta Venezia that so many dauntless fighter pilots take off to do battle with the enemy. This and the photograph below are from Goebbels' paper, Signal.

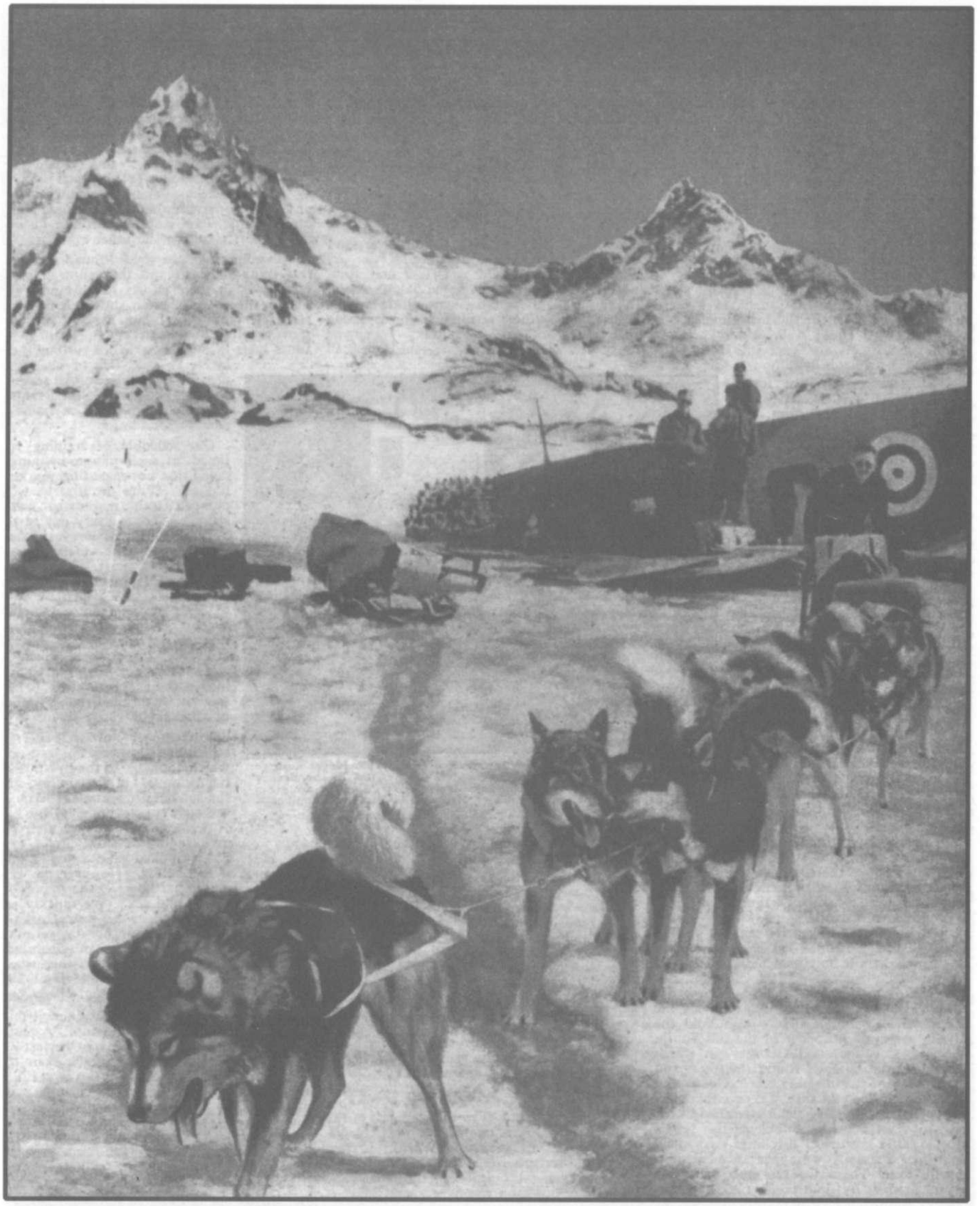


On the eastern side of Malta (left) there are five airfields: 1, Halfar; 2, Guidia; 3, Luca; 4, Krendi; and 5, Ta Venezia. Three of these are linked by a broad runway, 6. Aircraft parking grounds are shown at 7. Valletta harbour, 8, and Marsa Scirocco, 9, are the two chief bays in a much indented coast. During the month of July 147 enemy aircraft were brought down over and around Malta, of which 133 were destroyed by our fighters.

Air Vice-Marshal K. R. Park, C.B., D.F.C. (above), recently appointed Air Officer Commanding the R.A.F. Mediterranean in place of Air Vice-Marshal H. P. Lloyd. During the Battle of Britain he commanded No. 11 Fighter Group. It was his predecessor who gave the George Cross island the apt description quoted in our headline.

Photos, British Official & G.P.U.

Ferry Pilots Marooned in Greenland for 45 Days



HUSKIES TO THE RESCUE. One of the most dramatic air adventures of the war reached a happy ending when recently three men of the R.A.F. Ferry Command, who were missing for forty-five days, were brought back from Greenland in a U.S. flying-boat. They had flown a Hudson bomber to Newfoundland, and were waiting to cross the Atlantic when they were ordered to make a survey sortie over N.W. Greenland and then repair to Reykjavik, Iceland. But the flight to Iceland was rendered impossible by nightmare weather —dense sleet, icing and an electric storm which threw both compass and radio out of gear. Then one of the two engines failed. Petrol was nearly exhausted and a crash-landing had to be made on a sheet of water covered with ice, which immediately broke.

"We were getting ready to swim for it," related the pilot, "when we heard and saw something of a kind which only happens in story books. Dashing towards us across the wilderness of mountains, ice and water was a team of huskies, and behind them a line of men." These belonged to an American detachment who had come to establish a post. Near by was an Eskimo hamlet; otherwise there were no human beings for five hundred miles. The huskies were harnessed to the task of salvaging everything that could be quickly removed from the sinking plane. A wireless transmitter was improvised and faint signals sent out. Rescue was, however, impossible until, after forty-five days, a Catalina flying-boat was able to land and embark the Hudson crew.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

We Trained For the R.A.F. in America

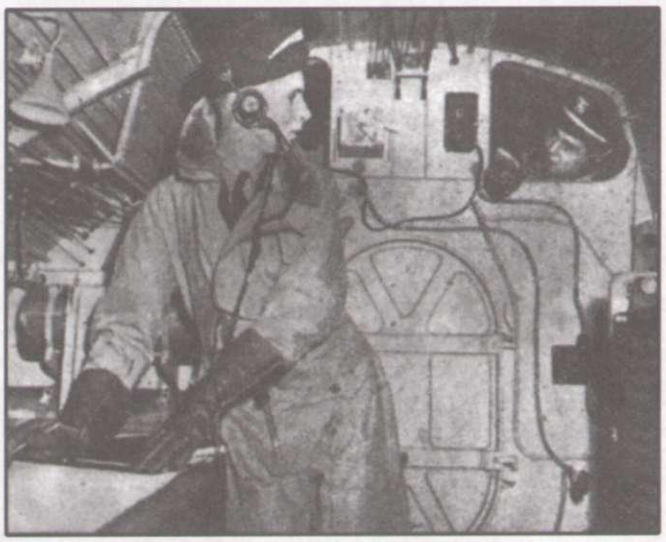
Just over a year ago there was a great need of increased training capacity for aircrews, and the U.S. Government offered to place training facilities in the United States at the disposal of the R.A.F.—an offer that was gratefully accepted. The article that follows is from the pen of one of the young men who were trained under the scheme. Now, however, the training capacity in the British Commonwealth has been so extended that it has been possible to relinquish the U.S. facilities in favour of U.S. Air Force cadets.

A FEW weeks ago I arrived back in England from the United States as a trained observer of the Royal Air Force—one of the many thousands who are completing their flying instruction undisturbed within the borders of that vast domain. It was my good fortune to be detailed along with many of my fellows for instruction in South Florida, where the subtropical climate, which had made the district famous as the World's Playground in happier times, was also found to be ideal for flying.

First, however, we were to spend a short term of preparation in Canada at a large depot camp where, for the first time in our two years, we could walk along brightly illuminated streets and gaze into shop windows gay with neon lighting.

When we arrived we found Canada at its loveliest. The snow was packed hard underfoot, and every tree, every roof-top, was hidden beneath a deep layer of white, which moulded sharp outlines into things of beauty.

Our new-found friends made us very welcome, inviting us at once to their own homes and firesides to ask us details of England as it is today: the England that is still the "Old Country" to them. Many of the people we met during our short sojourn there were folk who left England but a decade or so ago, and many were the yarns that went back and forth before the crackling fires. We found them quietly confident in the progress of the conflict, and justifiably proud of the contribution which Canada is making in men, money and munitions of war. They are lusty sons of Empire, these men from the teeming cities and vast forest solitudes of our great Dominion, and we felt privileged to be amongst them.



R.A.F. NAVIGATOR receiving instruction from a U.S. Naval Reserve pilot. Coastal Command navigator cadets are trained in the Breezy Point area of the Naval Air Station at Norfolk, Virginia, and are given actual experience as crew members of the U.S. Catalina flying-boats.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

In a few days, though, we had to climb aboard our train for the long journey south. We pulled out of the station waving a cheery goodbye to our Canadian friends. Three days and nights went by while we thundered across a continent. Canada's snowlands disappeared before the industrial regions around Portland and Boston. These in turn were swallowed in the mightier masses of New York and Philadelphia. The white dome of the Capitol in Washington slid into view and as quickly vanished. Before us now lay the broad lands which somehow still hold the mystic spell and grandeur of the old South. Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia—in which last Margaret Mitchell found the fount and inspiration of her masterpiece "Gone with the Wind." Into the distance, on either side, the cotton and tobacco fields stretched away, brown as yet with the stubble of last year's crop. Little groups of dwellings flashed by with their Shanty Town appearance enchanting the eye. There we saw the inevitable veranda with its inevitable rocking-chair, and crowds of happy little coloured children waving joyously as we rumbled on.

We were glad to stow greatcoats about this time, for it was noticeably warmer. Then, on our last night aboard, we roared over the Florida State line and awoke to find ourselves in Miami with a hot sun shining overhead.

Miami is a very lovely city. The prevailing colour of its well-proportioned modern buildings is white, thus enhancing its fresh and clean appearance. Wide boulevards are carefully laid out and are set about with graceful palms which sway gently in the soft Atlantic breezes.

On arrival we were issued with our khaki uniforms of slacks and shirts, as regulation Royal Air Force blue is not the ultimate in comfort when the temperature is around eighty degrees in the shade and the air almost saturated. Our quarters and food were excellent, although some palates found the rather highly spiced dishes a little strange at first. Fruit there was in abundance, along with plenty of eggs and milk. I enjoyed every item of diet except one—the American hot-dog; and that, I firmly believe, is manufactured from that precious commodity—rubber!

Since we arrived during a week-end there were no lectures for us until the following week, and we made the most of this first opportunity to look round the subtropical paradise in which we now found ourselves. The winter season was at its height, for although America had been engulfed in the War but a few weeks earlier, its grim effects had not yet reached out to mar the gaiety of Miami and its environs. Visitors from all over the United States still thronged the boulevards and gardens. In the happy crowds one could distinguish the easy drawl of the Southerner in contrast to the quick-clipped accent of the New Yorker. Again an olive skin would show the presence of the Latin, for Miami is one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the New World; a fact which pleased us, for we wanted to get the unbiased general opinion of the Americans in their outlook on the War; and here, if anywhere, it was to be found.

There are very few barriers of reserve to the American, and we rapidly made true-hearted friends. To many it came as a surprise and a profound revelation of Anglo-American unity to know that men from Great Britain had come so far for training, and we were hard put to answer their many questions about conditions here. They follow our fortunes in England with close and sincere interest, but we found one of their impressions of England's size rather amusing: "It's so darned small," they would say, "don't all you folks get in each other's way?" I have a sneaking suspicion that one or two of our friends believe one could stand on top of St. Paul's and see France on one hand and Ireland on the other!

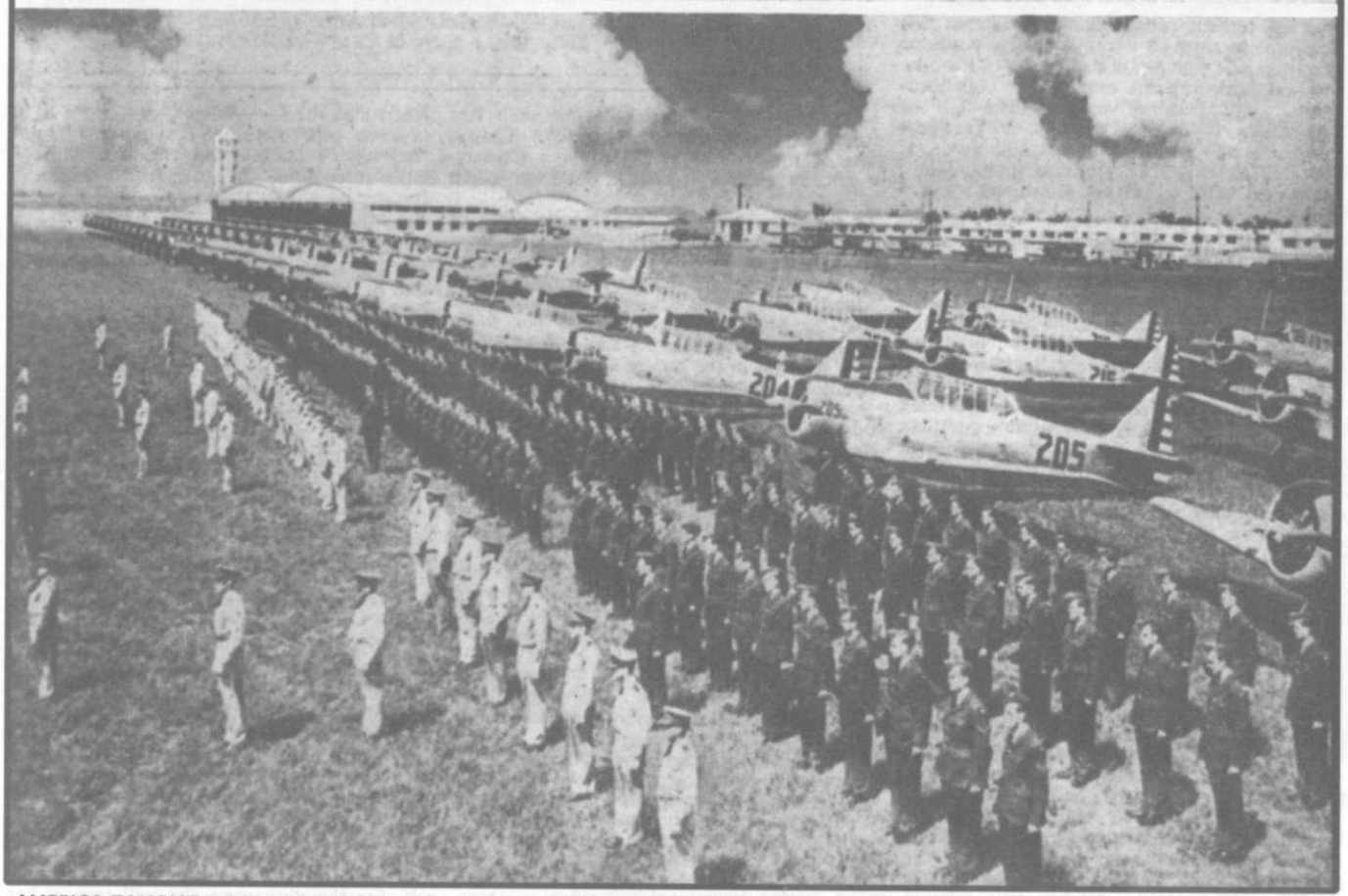
The comfort of the fighting man is a very real thing to them and they show a great generosity in their efforts to this end. In our locality huge open-air shows were staged regularly for Army and Navy benefit, patrons often buying tickets at two or three times their face value and then turning them in for re-issue free of charge to men of the Services. All sorts of concerts and parties were arranged to make the men feel at home in new surroundings.

Our schedule of training was timed to such minute-by-minute detail that our spare time was very limited. From the first we were plunged into real hard work, spending hours every day in the lecture-halls under the eyes of men with long experience in navigating heavy aircraft. Much time was spent in practical work on instruments with which we were to be concerned in our flying. Weeks passed and we realized that terms such as "celestial azimuth," "reciprocal bearing," and "running fix" were no longer things of mystery to us. Eagerly we awaited the day when our first flight was to be made.

I remember now that cheerful bunch of fellows on the transport which took us to the flying base, the roominess of the aircraft, and the sudden drowning of speech as the huge engines coughed into life. A perfect day for flying, and very soon we were swinging in slow circles over the base, which looked like a toy model thousands of feet below. However, we were soon too busy to gaze idly at the panorama of houses, glades and sea. We quickly got down to a routine and, as our instructors put it, "ironed out the kinks in our navigation." We found the work to be of absorbing interest, particularly the night flying, where conditions as nearly as possible resembled those to be encountered in actual operations.

Days flew by, and before we knew it final examinations were looming up. A little extra ounce to reach the peak of perfection, the excitement and anxiety of the examinations themselves—and then the great day when, midst speeches and cheering, we graduated as the proud possessors of our own flying log-books. At last we had earned the right to call ourselves navigators. A few days of freedom with all the hard work behind us came and went, and there was genuine regret in all our hearts when we at last had to bid farewell to the many sincere friends we had made in that land of sunshine. Soon we were heading north again with visions of home and precious leave in our minds. We spent another day or two in the Canadian camp depot, where the snow had now fled before the gay flowers of summer, and then, under the watchful eyes of the British Navy, we ploughed our way towards Old England.

Britons Learn to Fly in Florida's Sunny Clime



AMERICA TAUGHT R.A.F. AIRCREWS at a time when the speeding-up of training was a matter of urgency. These are scenes at U.S. flying schools while this invaluable help was being given to Britain. Top, embryo pilots return from an instruction flight at Lakeland School of Aeronautics, Florida. Below, a class at the Riddle-Mackay Aero College, Florida, lined up to receive their wings from Air-Marshal D. S. C. Evill, then Chief of R.A.F. Training Units in the U.S.A. In front are British officers and personnel of the flying school

Photos, Keystone, Planet News

THOSE THREE FATEFUL YEARS!

by Paul Tabori

Author of *Epitaph for Europe*

THREE years of war have changed Europe from a continent of uneasy peace, fitful prosperity and hectic brilliance into a vast expanse of misery, suspicion and slavery. Three years under Hitler or in his shadow have done more harm than the Thirty Years' War or the two centuries of Turkish rule. Mechanized war, total war, has wrought havoc at a speed that was still unknown in 1914–1918. In September 1939 there were four belligerents in Europe: today there are five neutrals left, and even Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Portugal and Switzerland belong to the class of non-belligerents and not to that of absolute neutrals, having chosen their ideological allegiance in some way or the other. It becomes more and more clear at the end of the third year that what we are experiencing is not a war but a vast series of revolutions of world-wide effect.

THERE were two great dividing lines, immense watersheds in the tragic landscape of these three years for Europe. The first was the fall of France; the second the Nazi attack on Russia.

The fall of France destroyed the final vestiges of the great system of alliances which Clemenceau, Barthou and others had laboured so hard to build. This system had been weakened by the *Anschluss* and severely shaken by Munich. But when France fell and the greatest military power on the Continent lay prostrate, the remaining unconquered neutrals were either driven into Hitler's arms or reduced to helpless panic. Some of them roused themselves from this extreme terror and wrote deathless pages of courage and defiance in the history of Europe. Others sank into the morass of "collaboration" and became vassals. The fall of France was the deepest point of Europe's disgrace, the nadir of her humiliation. It created the myth of German invincibility; it cut off Britain from the Continent.

The attack on Russia had the opposite effect. It was what many of the European nations had been praying for. They knew that Russia could not be defeated, or at least only at a cost which would destroy Germany in the end. For the Slav countries, Russia was still the big brother; now that she was fighting, they had an ally, near enough to support and succour them. Even if they had no way of linking up with her armies, the underground army of saboteurs, guerillas, partisans was given everywhere a new lease of life, new hope, new opportunities. Hitler tried to turn the Russian campaign into a sham crusade of Europe against Asia (for some time the German communiqués spoke not of the Axis or German forces but of "European" troops), but this propaganda trick had a short-lived success. Today the majority of "volunteers" from Spain, Norway, Belgium and other "protected" countries have returned, sadder and wiser men.

THE three years of war have proved the idiocy of neutrality in peacetime; the truth that no nation could stand aloof from others in distress. War has become indivisible, as M. Litvinov had maintained peace was; and the exiled governments have already begun to create regional unions and look forward to a Europe not forced into the strait jacket of "blocs" but organized in natural groups, interlocking and interdependent.

The three years have produced heroes and villains in plenty. A half-baked Norwegian visionary has given his name to a whole brood of traitors. But there were traitors before Vidkun Quisling: smooth-tongued betrayers like Seyss Inquart and Guido Schmidt in Austria; weak-kneed puppets like Hacha in Czechoslovakia, Horthy in Hungary and Antonescu in Rumania; ambitious fanatics and schemers like Mussert in Holland, Degrelle in Belgium, Scavenius in Denmark; odious mercenary scoundrels like Laval and Darlan in France, Neditch in Yugoslavia and King Boris in Bulgaria. Hitler's New Order proved to be broadminded about its local agents—a downright gangster like Ante Pavelitch, overlord of unhappy Croatia, or an ex-gaolbird like Sano Mach in Slovakia were given more or less free hand to murder and plunder their compatriots. It is significant that almost everywhere the popular support of these quislings represents a small fraction of the nation. And it is to the eternal glory of both Poland and Russia that no man was found willing to serve the usurper. That is one of the main reasons why the Gestapo rages with special violence in these territories.

Photo, Kelenyi

PAUL TABORI has written in Epitaph for Europe one of the few war books that will outlive the War. In the current number of World Digest I wrote of him:

"Not many English writers can rival this fortunate Hungarian in command of our idiom, and none, it is safe to say, has had so complete a training in European affairs. To read his book is more fully to appreciate what is meant by a good European. The truth about every people in Europe, stated with the restraint which comes from knowledge and understanding, is told superbly well in Epitaph for Europe."

My readers will, therefore, welcome the contribution which Mr. Tabori has expressly written for this issue and will be glad to know that he is to be a regular contributor to the pages of THE WAR ILLUSTRATED.—Ed.

IF the three years in Europe have given us an especially repulsive set of villains, they have certainly brought forth a group of heroes, worthy of these tremendous times. Men like De Gaulle who proved to the world that France had not forgotten her noble traditions; General Michailovitch whose epic struggle in the mountains of Bosnia and Montenegro must form one of the greatest chapters in human courage against desperate odds; the millions of nameless Poles, Serbs, Greeks, Russians—all these represent a more than adequate balance on the credit side of Europe. The hostages dying daily by the score; the Jews, walled up alive in the ghettos of Poland; the intellectuals pressed into slavery in the labour camps—the silent heroism and endurance have proved once more that the spirit can be stronger and more tenacious than the most cold-blooded and systematic oppression the world has ever known.

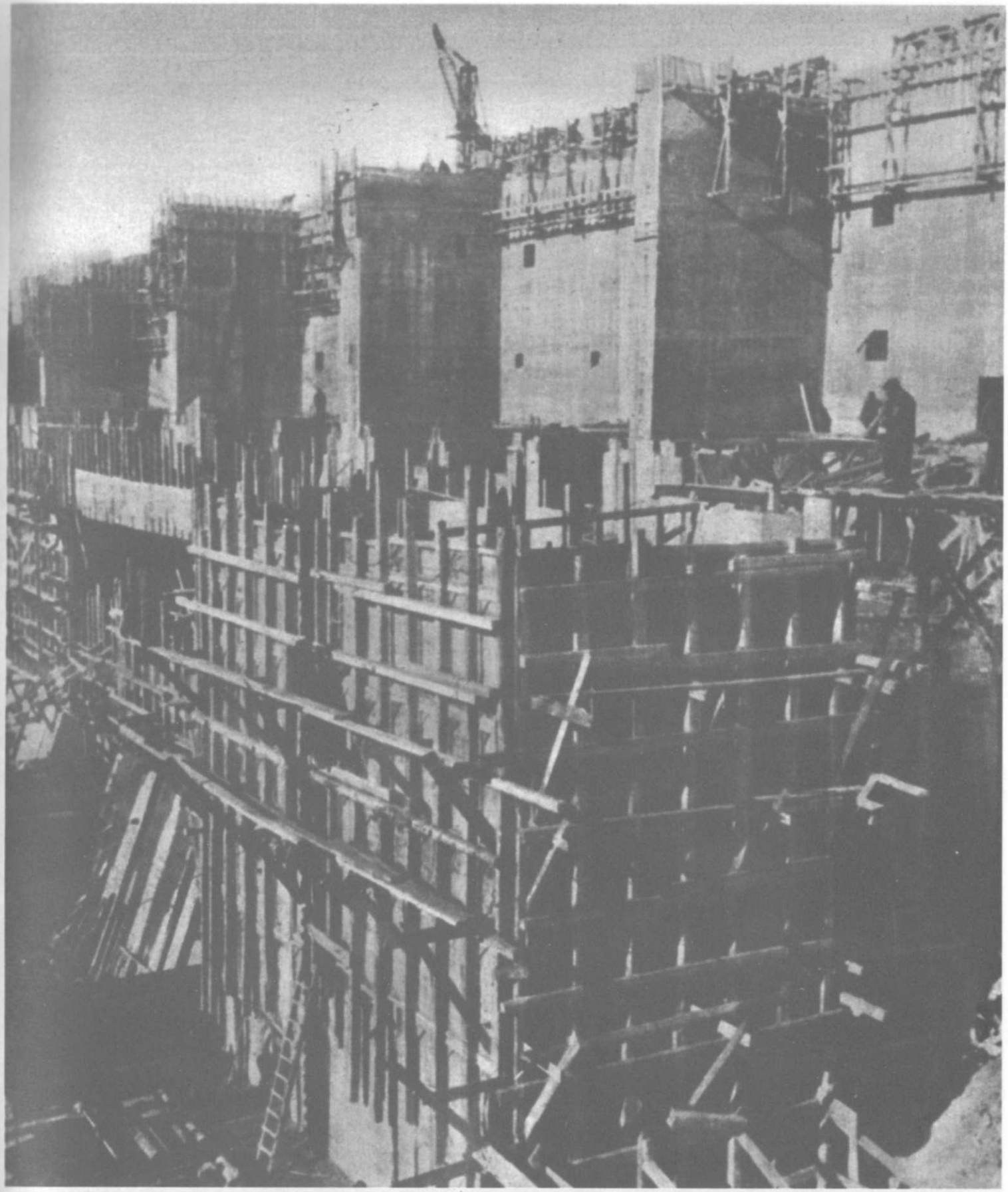
POLITICALLY Europe has experienced another phenomenon, unparalleled in history. I am referring to the immense mass-migrations compared to which the movements of tribes and nations in the first ten centuries of the Christian era were mere "conducted tours." The Reich has catapulted its citizens to a dozen different countries as colonists, policemen, officials. In small Slovenia alone fifty thousand people have been dispossessed and herded into desolate districts. The peregrinations of the Jews alone surpass the Forty Years which Israel spent in the desert. All over Europe millions of people have been forcibly ejected from their homes and sent to unaccustomed, inhospitable places. And a smaller yet no less important trickle of migration is taking place constantly—thousands of men and women who can no longer stand German tyranny try to escape to freedom. Only a small percentage succeed, but the tales of these escapes alone show that Europe has not given in to the tyrant. Apart from millions of prisoners-of-war Germany has also drawn to its huge unhappy penitentiary large numbers of foreign workers.

THE political and social hierarchy of Europe has changed and stiffened. On top there is the *Herrenvolk* with the top-heavy ruling caste of Nazis and military leaders. Next come the "allies" who are in reality satellites. One of the most tragi-comic sights in Europe is Italy—having been a "partner" in the Axis, she has now become a third-rate power, her gimcrack Caesar fading into obscurity, her rich beauty easy German plunder, every phase of her national life controlled by the Nazis. Hungary and Rumania, the two jackals, are ready to fly at each other's throat if Germany should remove the leash. Bulgaria and Slovakia have also sunk to vassaldom. Finland's tragic case shows that you cannot sup with the devil however long your spoon's handle.

The satellites are followed in the hierarchy by the occupied and oppressed countries; and in this category there is strict distinction between the "collaborationist" states who give comparatively little trouble and those more or less openly mutinous. On the whole it can be said that the daily sabotage acts, assassinations, passive and active demonstrations show that Hitler is actually farther today from subduing the continent than he had been these three years.

IN the spiritual field there are two main facts about Europe. One is the revival of religion and the defiance of the servants of God—Bishop Berggrav in Norway, the Orthodox Patriarch in Yugoslavia are only two examples of this proud, loyal courage—the other is the complete barrenness in creative arts. Hitler's Europe hasn't produced a single outstanding work in literature, the drama, the cinema or the fine arts during these years. You cannot create beauty under a whip.

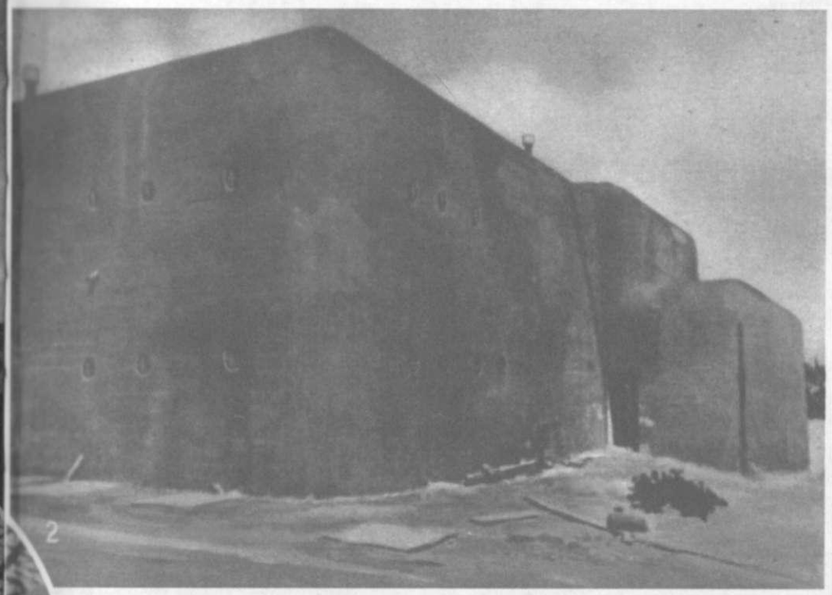
Today Europe's heart is in London, the centre and magnet of the free. But millions of individual hearts are beating all over the unhappy continent, ready to combine and defy openly the monstrous plague of a diseased political creed. Europe is waiting, no longer hopeless as after the collapse of France or too exuberant as after June 22, 1941—waiting with sober confidence, patient grit, for the day when she will recover her soul and forget the long nightmare of these three years.



Photo, Keystone

What's the Riddle of these Photos?

In this and succeeding pages we print a series of striking photographs issued by German propaganda. Above is one that purports to show submarine shelters in course of construction on the French coast. "Very like a whale" as Polonius said. It looks a formidable rampart against British invasion. Its use for U-boats is less apparent.



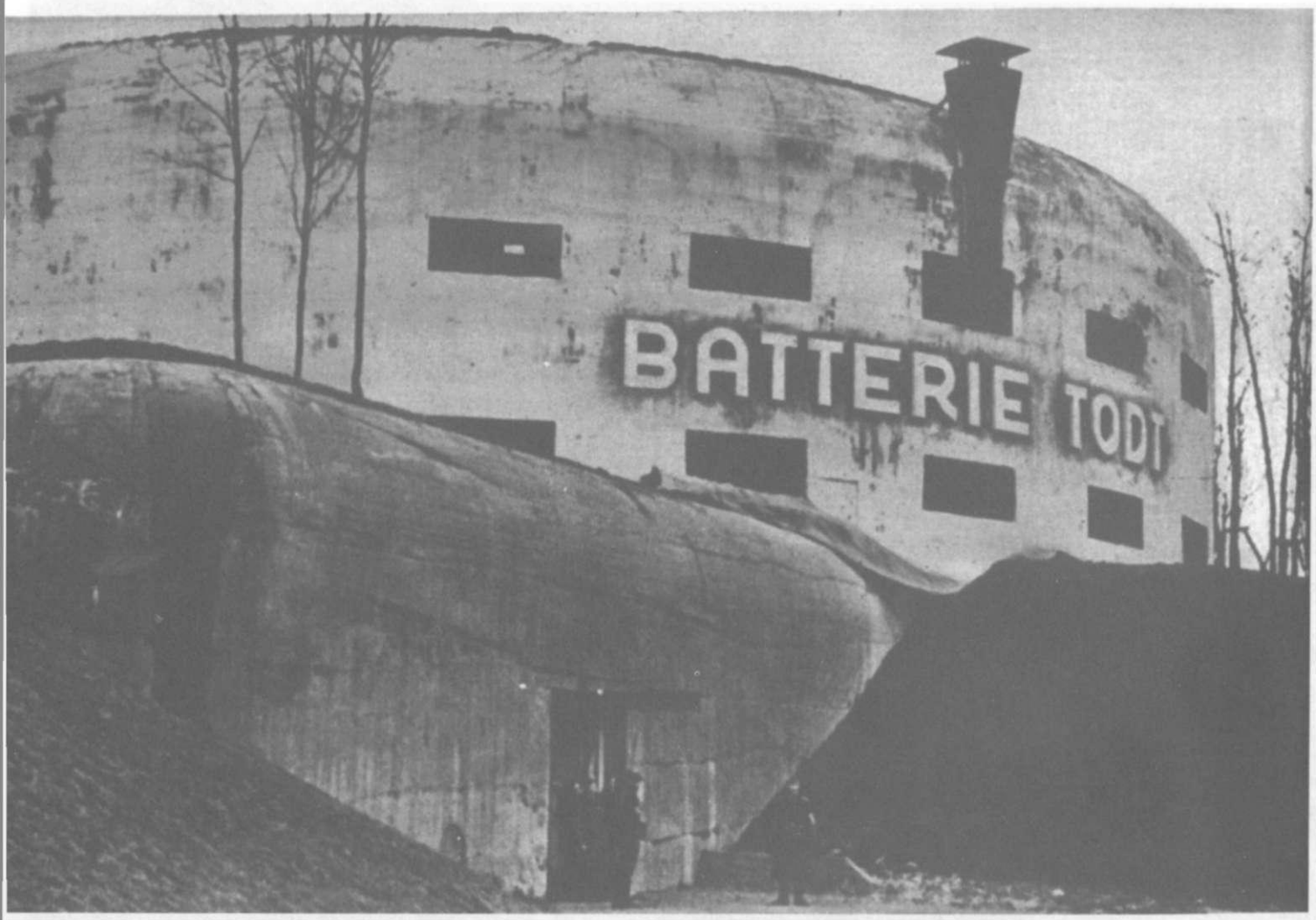
On Channel Coast and Atlantic Shore:

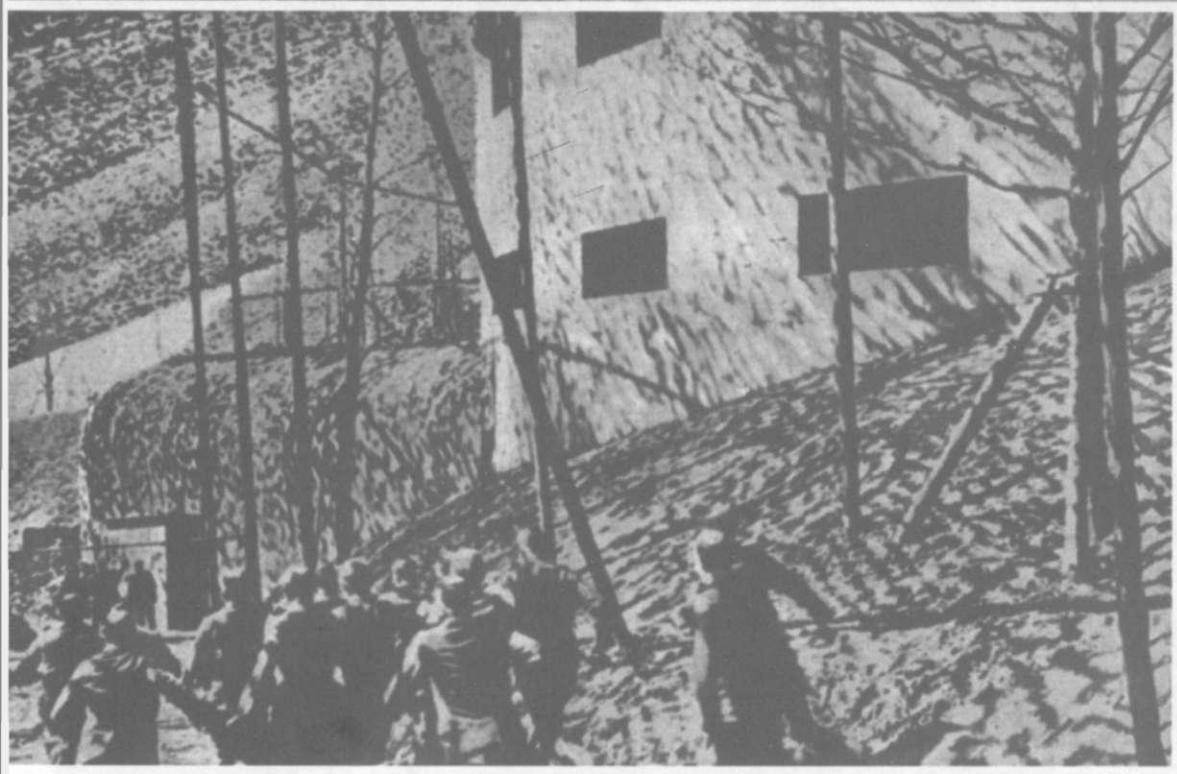
Stretching for 130 miles along the north coast of France, the Germans claim that their Channel defences constitute a coastal Siegfried Line. (1) Long-range gun recently installed. (2) Blockhouse apparently devoid of guns or gun casemates; the portholes and chimneys are for ventilation. (3) Enemy artillerymen with so-called "champagne cocktail" shells.

Photos, The Daily Express, Keystone, Associated Press

Hitler's Bastions Against Invasion

(4) German machine-gun post on a cliff-top acts as a defence against low-flying R.A.F. bombers. (5) A gun crew makes ready. The Germans employ their heaviest guns to attack British shipping in the Channel; these guns are placed on rails and frequently moved, since they present an obvious target (6) Guns firing from the railway siding of a factory





Photos, Sport & General, Keystone

Giant Fortress of Steel and Concrete

"Batterie Todt" (top), named after Fritz Todt, builder of the Siegfried Line, serves as an important link in the German system of Channel fortifications. This enemy stronghold on the French coast is camouflaged from the air and sea. The Battery is manned night and day. Men of the garrison (below) are seen rushing to the gun posts as the alarm signal sounds.

THE WAR'S MOST VITAL CONFERENCE

Churchill, Stalin and Harriman at the Kremlin

At four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, August 12, three great American Liberator bombers, escorted by Russian fighters, approached the red roofs of Moscow, circled over the airport and quietly came to earth. That people of importance were arriving was apparent from the presence on the tarmac of M. Molotov, the Foreign Minister, Marshal Shaposhnikov, the Russian Chief of Staff, and other Soviet representatives, as well as the British and American Ambassadors, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr and Admiral Standley, and Gen. Follet Bradley, of the U.S. Army.

As the first aircraft came to rest the guard of honour presented arms, and massed military bands struck up the British national anthem, followed by that of America and the Internationale. Out from the bomber stepped Mr. Churchill, a broad smile on his face, his fingers held aloft in the V sign. At the invitation of M. Stalin he had flown from Britain at the head of British and American delegations, in which was included Mr. Averell Harriman, for important conferences.

After greetings and introductions and an inspection of the tall, steel-helmeted guard of honour, two short statements by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Harriman were recorded on the airfield (*see* panel above). The delegates then faced a battery of Soviet photographers, and at last entered the fleet of waiting cars and were driven to the Kremlin. The citizens of Moscow had noticed in Gorky Street a number of exceptionally smart infantrymen and some Cossacks in parade uniform, but as yet they were unaware of the identity of the visitors whom they could just discern in the limousines as they sped past.

In addition to the Prime Minister, the British delegation included Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office; Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell; Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Chief of the Air Command, Middle East; Sir Charles Wilson, the Prime Minister's personal physician; Col. E. I. C. Jacob; Commander C. R. Thompson, R.N., personal assistant to Mr. Churchill as Minister of Defence; Lt.-Col. Dunphil; and Mr. T. R. Rowan, the Premier's private secretary. Gen. Wavell did not arrive until Thursday, his plane having had to return to Teheran after taking off from there, owing to a slight mishap.

'UNTIL THE HITLER REGIME HAS TURNED TO DUST'

We are fully determined, whatever sufferings and difficulties lie ahead of us, to continue the struggle hand in hand with our comrades and brothers until the last remnants of the Hitler regime have turned to dust and remain in our memories as a warning and example for the future.

Winston Churchill

The President of the United States asked me to accompany the British Prime Minister on his most important journey to Moscow during this decisive moment of the war.

The President of the United States will agree to all decisions taken by Mr. Churchill. America will stand hand in hand together with the Russians.

Averell Harriman

The United States delegation, in addition to Mr. Harriman, included Maj.-Gen. Maxwell, Commander-in-Chief American Forces in Egypt, and Brigadier S. P. Sparlding. In all, the delegates totalled twenty.

On his way from Britain Mr. Churchill had met. Gen. Smuts at Cairo, and the talks between them lasted for more than a day. This was the first meeting of the British and South African Premiers in the present war.

The evening of their arrival in Moscow Mr. Churchill and Mr. Harriman had their first talk with M. Stalin, when M. Molotov and Marshal Voroshilov were also present. It lasted nearly four hours, for business had to be conducted through interpreters, and throughout the proceedings the Prime Minister, in the words of an observer, "worked like a beaver." It was suggested that after his journey he might have preferred rest and relaxation. Mr. Churchill poohpoohed the idea: "I never let pleasure clog the works of business." With him at this meeting were Sir Alan Brooke, Sir Alexander Cadogan and Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr. Mr. Harriman attended as the representative of President Roosevelt. The discussions, it was announced, were carried on "in an atmosphere of cordiality and complete sincerity."

The next day (Thursday) Mr. Churchill had a long talk with M. Molotov, and later a second meeting with M. Stalin. The Soviet leader smoked his famous pipe, Mr. Churchill his equally famous cigars.

On Friday there were further consultations and discussions, by the end of which the essential business had been transacted, so that evening the delegates relaxed at a great banquet given by their hosts at the Kremlin, in the room Catherine the Great used as a ballroom. The entire Soviet Politburo, which virtually decides Russian policy, had been invited to meet them, but there was nothing stiff or formal about the festivity. The speeches, of which there were 25, were light and witty, and the whole atmosphere one of complete friendliness. M. Stalin was in great spirits, cracking many jokes, and himself proposing several of the innumerable toasts. Mr. Churchill's sonorous voice was heard booming "To the President" as he rose, glass in hand, to the toast of President Roosevelt. M. Stalin wore his customary semi-uniform of light brown summer blouse, brown trousers and regulation black boots. Mr. Churchill had donned the "siren suit" which was so often noticed during his visit to America.

On Saturday Mr. Churchill and Mr. Harriman spent the day in the country near Moscow. Late in the afternoon a final meeting with M. Stalin took place, but this was more in the nature of a farewell, for complete and full agreement on the momentous subjects under discussion had been reached the previous day. Owing to these constant preoccupations the Prime Minister was able to see nothing of the life and activities of the great Soviet capital on this, his first visit. In the early dawn of Sunday morning he and his party left by air on their homeward journey.

On Monday evening, August 17, Moscow radio officially informed the Russian people of Mr. Churchill's mission, at the same time that the B.B.C. gave the news to British listeners. In the words of the London communiqué: "A number of decisions were reached covering the field of the war against Hitlerite Germany and her associates in Europe. This just war of liberation both Governments are determined to carry on with all their power and energy until the complete destruction of Hitlerism and any similar tyranny has been achieved."

In a last message to M. Stalin the Prime Minister said: "I am very pleased to have visited Moscow: firstly, because it was my duty to express myself; and, secondly, because I am certain that our contact will contribute usefully to our cause."

THE HISTORIC MOSCOW CONFERENCE began one hour and a half after the Liberators had landed. The next day Mr. Churchill, who spent each night in the quiet countryside outside Moscow, drove back to the Kremlin with Sir Alexander Cadogan and had long discussions with M. Stalin and M. Molotov. This specially posed photograph shows, seated, left to right, Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Prime Minister, Mr. Harriman, M. Stalin and M. Molotov. The Conference Room was furnished chiefly with a 20-ft.-long table; across its width the two leaders faced each other.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

This was the Cost of the Passage of the Don

FIGHTING ON THE DON FRONT was unparalleled in its intensity as the Germans, disregarding their enormous losses, threw in fresh reserves. The top photograph shows an appalling scene of desolation in what was once the busy centre of a town on the Don after the Germans had captured the place. Russian bombers and heavy artillery ceaselessly pounded enemy tanks and lorries during the Germans' crossing of the great river. Below, a bridge and its approaches choked with the wreckage of enemy vehicles.

Photos, Sport & General, Keystone

Behind the Front with the Red Army

IN RUSSIA the importance of mechanized warfare is fully recognized. 1. Moscow railwaymen have built an armoured train and presented it to the Red Army. Members of the train's crew are seen lined up in front of it before leaving for a battle zone. 2. Radioed picture showing Soviet anti-tank units passing through a village on their way to the front. 3. Jumbled mass of captured enemy tanks brought to a special factory for repair, after which they will be used by the Red Army.

Photos, U.S.S.R. Official and Planet News

THE WAR AT SEA

by **Francis E. McMurtrie**

An important Allied offensive was opened in the South-West Pacific on August 7. In the course of this operation strong forces of the United States Marine Corps were landed on certain of the islands of the Solomon group, including Guadalcanar and Tulagi, and according to the latest news available at the time of writing are now "well established" there. In support of these landings repeated air raids have been made on Japanese bases at Rabaul, Lae, Salamaua and Buna, as well as on more remote spots such as Timor and the Kei Islands, an enemy-occupied group in the Banda Sea.

Units of the main United States Pacific Fleet have recently been added to the naval forces already assigned to the South-West Pacific sector, which include both American and Australian warships. Substantial damage has been inflicted on the enemy naval and air forces, though details are not likely to be published until the operation has been concluded.

H.M.S. EAGLE, one of the oldest British aircraft carriers, was sunk in the Mediterranean on August 11 while defending a vital convoy bound for Malta. She displaced 22,600 tons, accommodated 21 aircraft and was completed in 1924. Inset, Capt. L. D. Mackintosh, D.S.C., R.N., her commander, who was among the 930 officers and ratings saved. *Photos, Daily Mirror, Lafayette*

With the object of calming anxiety in Japan, the Tokyo authorities have issued the wildest claims of devastation inflicted on the Allied forces, culminating in a broadcast on August 15 asserting that 11 cruisers, six destroyers and ten transports had been sunk. Most of this destruction is alleged to have been accomplished by torpedo aircraft, 21 of which it is admitted were lost "by hurling themselves with headlong crashes on to the decks of warships." This is not the first time this particular story has been put forward. It originated with the Italians, who before the war began were fond of boasting that their airmen were prepared to sacrifice their lives in this spectacular fashion to make certain of achieving hits. Actually the only Allied losses so far reported from official sources comprise one cruiser sunk, and two cruisers, two destroyers and one transport damaged—a modest total compared with enemy claims. The enemy lost 36 aircraft in the initial landing operations.

Washington stated on August 17 that the only engagement between surface forces was fought on the night of August 8-9, when an enemy force of cruisers and destroyers attempted to attack our transports, but was heavily repulsed. It had previously been explained that the immediate objective was to expel the Japanese from the Tulagi area and to make use of that region for Allied purposes. Evidently it had been the enemy's purpose to use it as a base for offensive operations against Allied positions covering the line of communications to Australia and New Zealand.

An initial surprise was effected, and though the enemy counter-attacked rapidly and with vigour, he failed to expel the landing parties. The great significance of the whole operation is that it marks the Allied assumption of the initiative against Japan. Previously it has always been the enemy who has done the attacking. Operations are under the immediate direction of Vice-Admiral Robert L. Ghormley (*see* portrait p. 163), who until April was United States Naval Observer in London, and under the general control of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The garrison of Malta, whose dauntless defence has excited such admiration throughout the Allied countries, has again been reinforced and supplied by an important convoy under the protection of the Royal Navy. In the escort were included battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and minesweepers, which were called upon to beat off constant attacks by aircraft and U-boats. Italian cruisers and destroyers also approached from the Tyrrhenian Sea, but as soon as a striking force of aircraft assailed them they retreated without coming within range of our gunfire. One of our submarines, commanded by Lieut. A. C. G. Mars, R.N., succeeded in hitting two of the enemy cruisers (which included ships mounting both 8-inch and 6-inch guns) with torpedoes. Though there is no evidence that either was sunk, air reconnaissance showed that one had 60 ft. of her bows blown away.

Before this encounter developed, H.M.S. Eagle, an aircraft carrier of 22,600 tons, was torpedoed by a U-boat and became a total loss, though luckily 930 of her officers and men were saved. The Eagle had an unusual history. Laid down on the Tyne in 1913 as the Chilean battleship Almirante Cochrane, she was acquired by the Admiralty during the last war and completed as an aircraft carrier. Her design was therefore somewhat obsolete, but in spite of the fact that her maximum speed was 24 knots and her complement of aircraft only 21, she has done good work in the present conflict. Some of her planes took part, with those of H.M.S. Illustrious, in the famous torpedo attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto on November 11, 1940; and on various occasions her aircraft have disposed of Italian destroyers and submarines with which they have been in action.

Regardless of the Eagle's loss, the convoy continued on its way and after hard fighting reached its destination. In addition to the Eagle our losses include H.M.S. Manchester, a cruiser of 9,400 tons, completed in 1938, H.M.S. Cairo, an old cruiser of 4,200 tons, re-armed for anti-aircraft escort duties, and H.M.S. Foresight, a destroyer of 1,350 tons. Two enemy submarines were destroyed and at least 66 aircraft (possibly 93), while we lost only eight.

Vice-Admiral E. N. Syfret, who was in command of the whole operation, has worthily maintained the high tradition established during the first twelve months of the war with Italy by Admiral Sir James Somerville, who will always be remembered for his famous order: "The convoy must go through." Rear-Adm. A. L. St. G. Lyster was in command of the aircraft carriers, and Rear-Adm. H. M. Burrough of the light forces.

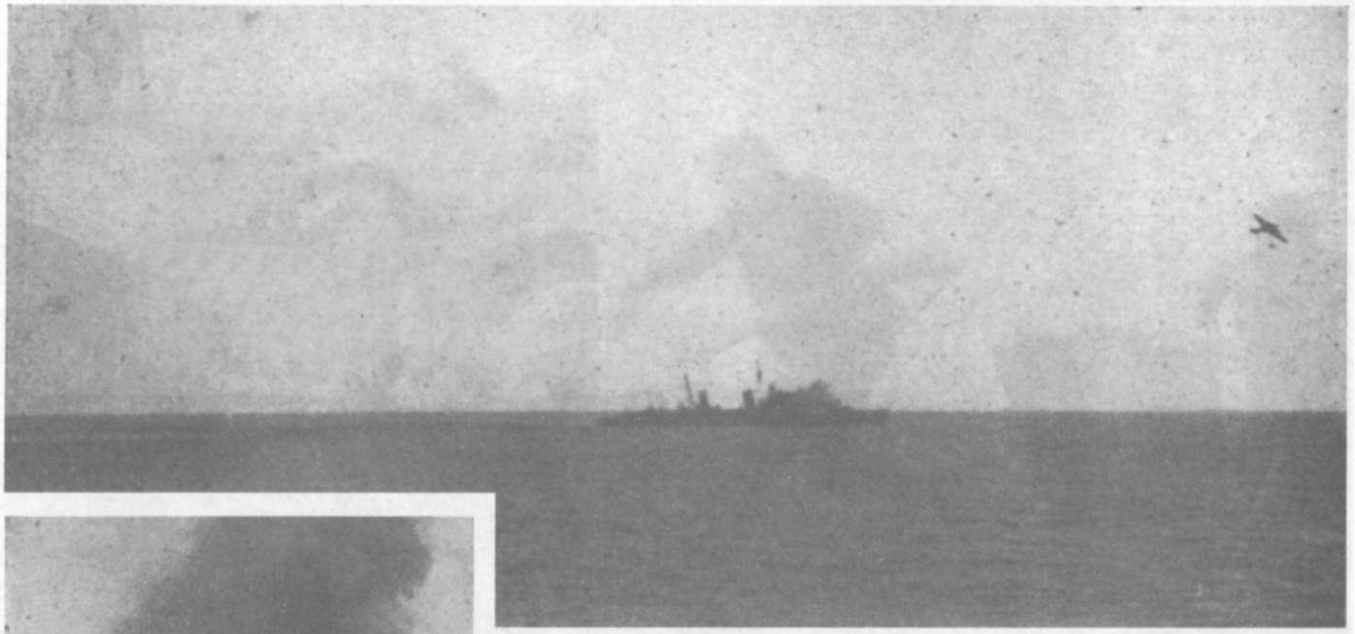
In case it may be questioned whether the retention of Malta is worth the naval, mercantile and air losses which have had to be sustained to keep the island supplied, it may be pointed out that it is the only bastion on the northern flank of our Mediterranean front which the enemy has been unable to overcome.

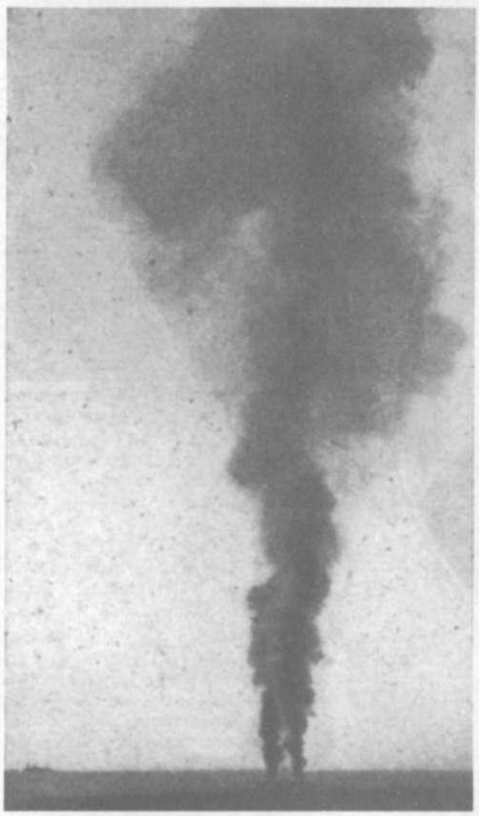
Malta has served the threefold purpose of affording a base for the interception of enemy supplies to Libya by submarines and light craft; of providing an important intermediate stage for aircraft, and for air attacks on Axis sea communications and bases; and of constituting a miniature but most effective "second front," which has been the means of keeping large numbers of enemy aircraft away from other theatres of war. Altogether not less than 800 enemy planes have been destroyed in abortive assaults on the Maltese stronghold.

An American merchant vessel has been sunk by a surface raider in the South Atlantic. The raider is described as a heavily armed vessel of mercantile design and appearance, with an extensive fuel supply, resembling in her main features the notorious Altmark. Germany possesses several such ships, which were undoubtedly designed for this purpose.

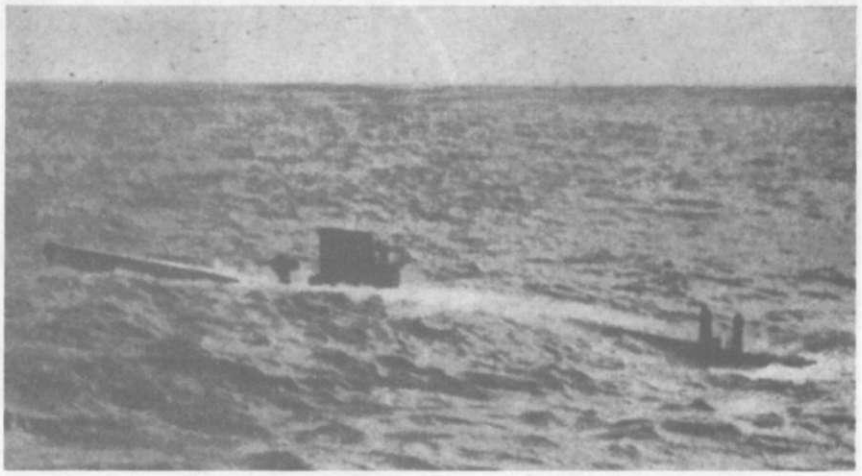
It is clear that no raider can afford to make more than fleeting appearances upon the trade routes, the bulk of her time being perforce spent in unfrequented areas lest she be sighted and run to earth. This necessarily sets a limit on the amount of destruction that she can accomplish in a given time.

Escorts Take Deadly Toll of Convoy Raiders





ITALIAN BOMBER (above), swooping to attack a British destroyer, has been hit by the ship's deadly pom-pom fire, and makes a determined bid to escape. A few minutes later the plane crashes in flames into the sea (left). These photographs were taken during an actual Axis attack on a Mediterranean convoy.

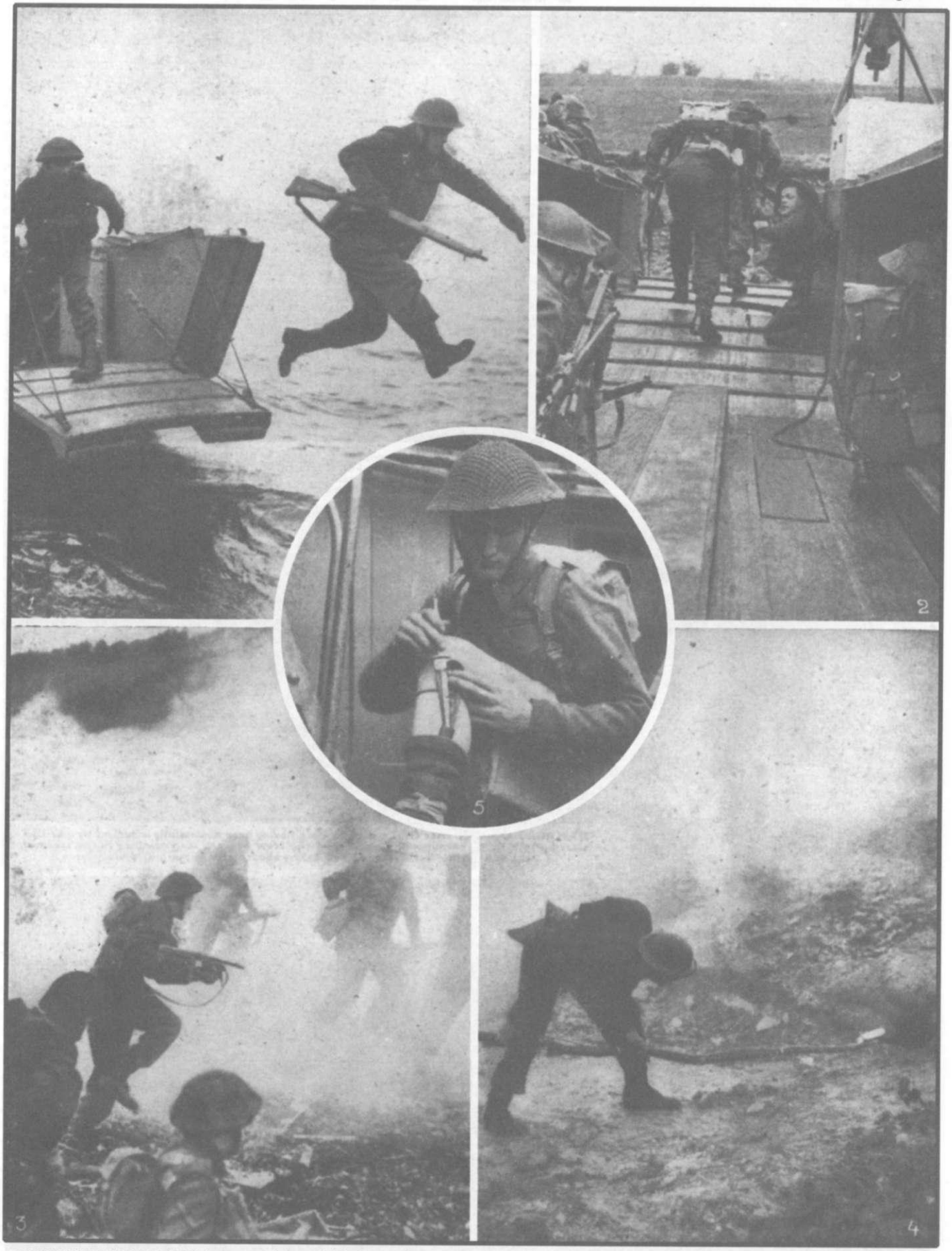


DAMAGED U-BOAT rises to the surface after having been successfully attacked by a British warship in a fierce encounter. Members of the crew who are seen standing in the stern of the submarine were rescued and taken aboard the warship as prisoners.

LEADING A CONVOY ESCORT into Malta harbour, this British destroyer reaches port after warding off enemy submarines and aircraft in the hazardous waters of the Mediterranean.

Photos British Official, Daily Mirror, Associated Press

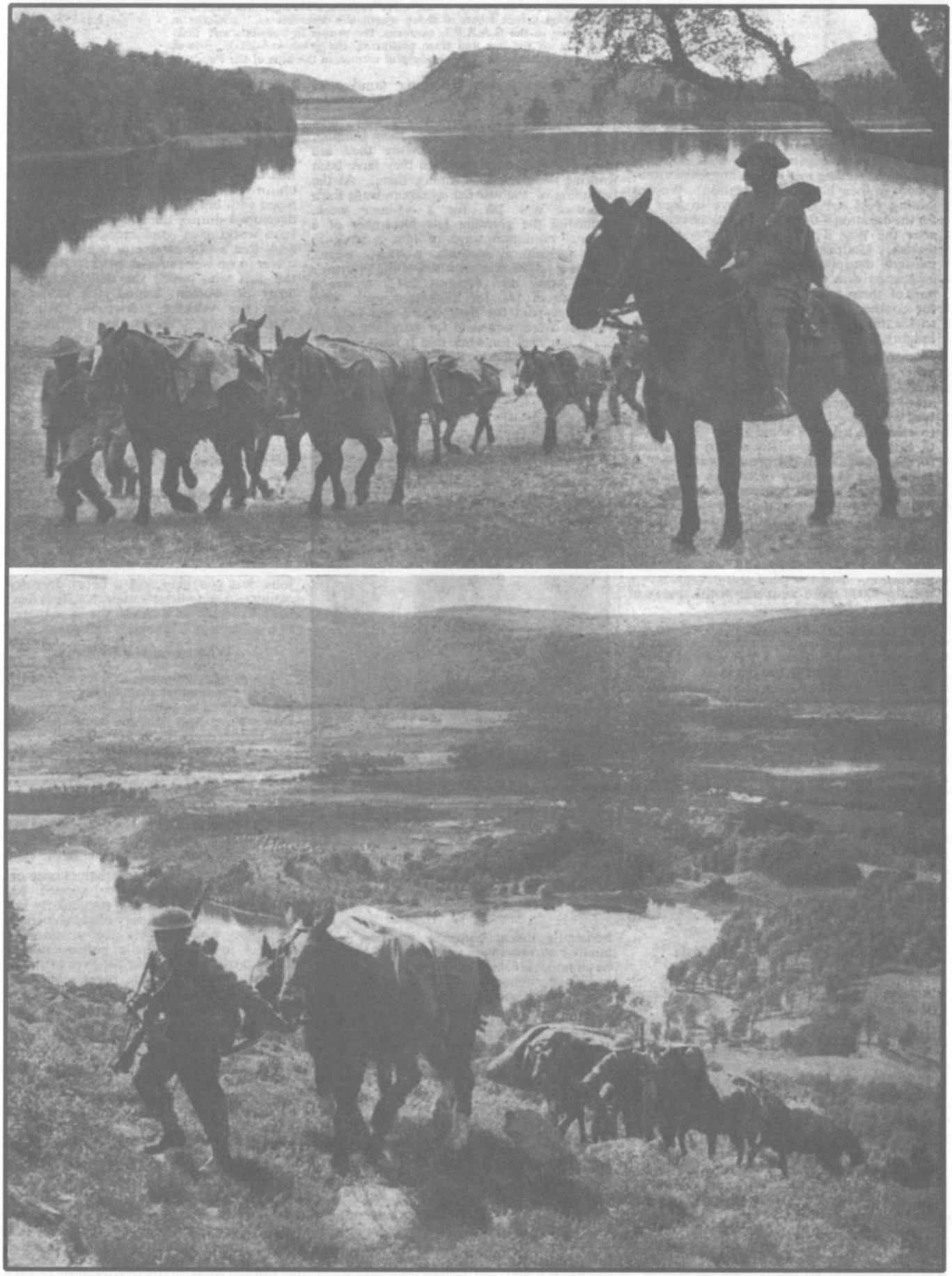
Special Service Troops Prepare for 'The Day'



COMMANDOS IN ACTION have proved formidable fighters in raids on enemy-occupied territory such as the reconnaissance in force at Dieppe on Aug. 19. The photographs show the rigorous training which these men undergo in preparation for such combined operations. 1. Disembarking from landing-craft. 2. Preparing to jump ashore. 3. Advancing under cover of a smoke-screen across a beach. 4. Thrusting an explosive charge into a pill-box opening by means of a pole charge. 5. Part of the equipment carried by these troops is the dirk—a useful weapon which is worn inside the stocking.

Photos British Official: Crown Copyright

Indians Trek By Scottish Lochs and Hills



ROYAL INDIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS units are here seen against an unfamiliar background. Stationed in Scotland, a team of pack-horses, top, begins the mountain climb as it carries stores and equipment beyond the reach of mechanized transport. Below, the pack-train has mounted to a higher altitude, while far below it stretches the lovely panorama of the Scottish countryside.

Photos, British Official

Women in Uniform: Civilian Work and Pay

Following her description of conditions of service in the three Women's Services (see page 152) IRENE CLEPHANE in this second article treats of those whom she describes as "civilians in uniform"—the women who serve in the N.A.A.F.I. canteens, the nurses in hospitals and first-aid posts, the cheery conductors on the bus and tram platforms, the green-and-khaki girls of the Women's Land Army, and the stalwart and ever-helpful women in the blue of the Police.

CIVILIAN women doing war work exceed in number those in the forces, and many of them also wear uniform. Take, for instance, the women in N.A.A.F.I. (Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes), the official canteen organization whose object is to provide serving men with a homelike atmosphere in their hours of recreation. Women joining N.A.A.F.I. do not have to sign on for the duration—though they may be retained after the War if they wish to remain in its service. Uniform is worn, but there is no military discipline, for though so closely associated with the Forces, N.A.A.F.I. is not part of them. Rates of pay range from 20s. for counter, general, and kitchen assistants, to 45s. for fully qualified cooks, plus board, lodging, and uniform.

Then there is nursing, the service which calls more urgently than any other for recruits. Girls of conscription age can always volunteer for nursing, even if they wait until they are about to be "directed" to essential work of some kind. Nursing is of equal value to civilians and to the armed forces, especially in the present war when air raids mean thousands of civilian casualties. Many young women between 18 and 30 who feel a call to nursing as a career have already become student nurses, at a starting wage of £40 a year, plus board, lodging, laundry, medical attendance and uniform. Many nurses who had retired have returned to their profession. But the need still continues: a call for 5,000 more went out in the spring of 1942.

Women drawn to nursing who yet do not want to make it a career are doing splendid work in the Civil Nursing Reserve as Nursing Auxiliaries. The age limits are 18 to 55, and candidates need have had no previous nursing experience. Over 25,000 have taken up full-time service in hospitals and first-aid posts all over the country. In hospitals they are paid £55 a year and receive free board, lodging and laundry, or a cash allowance in place of them; in first-aid posts or medical-aid posts in shelters, they are paid £2 7s. a week and keep themselves.

During the period of heavy air raids the hospitals suffered many direct hits. A number of nurses were killed at their posts, and hundreds showed the most conspicuous heroism, attending to their patients under conditions of appalling horror, moving them when necessary from wrecked or burning wards without a thought for their own safety.

Forty Thousand Land Girls

The Minister of Agriculture recently announced that Great Britain is now producing two-thirds of its own food supply. The attainment of this fine result is due in no small measure to the skill and devotion of the Women's Land Army. This organization, though called an "army," is purely civilian. It resembles the Forces only in that its members have to promise to serve for the duration of the war, and to go where directed. First launched in 1916, during the war of 1914-1918, it was revived in June 1939. By the end of August 1939, some 9,000 volunteers had offered themselves, and 5,000 more were awaiting interviews. In those last momentous days before war started, members assisted for the first time in getting in the harvest. By the end of October over 1,000 were in full-time jobs; by the end of February 1940 nearly 4,000 had been placed, and the demand for their services was growing. The uniform of khaki corduroy breeches, green pullover, and jaunty little khaki felt hat (provided free at yearly intervals) was becoming familiar in town and country.

Land Army girls receive 10s. a week, plus free board and lodging, during their training, which lasts four weeks. When they are trained the farmer for whom they have been working is expected to employ them. At the beginning of the war the minimum wage for a volunteer was 28s. for a 48-hour week. Following the granting last December of a national minimum wage of 60s. a week to male agricultural workers, women's wages, too, were raised, and members of the Women's Land Army now (August 1942) receive a minimum of 18s. for a 48-hour week after they have paid for their board and lodging. Though overtime is paid for extra, the rate of pay is not high for work that is hard in itself, requires considerable skill, involves long hours of outdoor work in all weathers, and

HARVESTING WHEAT in Hertfordshire, these girls belonging to the Women's Land Army are hard at work. Throughout the country thousands of women are ensuring that Britain's harvest of 1942 will be a record one.
Photo, E. W. Tattersall

frequently means complete isolation in unfamiliar surroundings, where even a bath may be an impossible luxury. One Cornish farmer remarked, "After the land girl is trained she is certainly worth more than we pay for her."

By the end of 1940, 9,000 Land Army members had been placed in jobs. By July 1941, 16,000 were at work in England and Wales, 1,300 in Scotland; and in that month the Queen became the patron of the W.L.A. In the summer of 1942 the number employed had risen to 40,000. Members of the Land Army are exempt from direction by the Ministry of Labour. Their work includes milking and dairy work, general farm work, fruit and vegetable cultivation, the care of livestock, tractor driving, and the hewing and measuring of timber.

The girl transport conductor is a commonplace today. In the London area alone, out of some 19,000 conductors of buses, trams and trolley-buses, 8,000 are now women. They work under the same conditions and for the same hours as the men. Blitz or no blitz, they all carry on. And though after 2 to 3 weeks training they start at 83s. 8d. a week, after 6 months on the road they are paid the men's minimum of 93s. a week, and thereafter work up to the same maximum, 99s. a week. The women conductors employed by the London Passenger Transport Board wear an attractive and comfortable uniform of jacket and slacks in pale grey piped with blue. More than one romance has developed during the two years women have been working as conductors, and the Board finds that a wife conductor behind a husband driver in no way impedes work. But besides the girls who punch the tickets, there is an army of women behind the scenes who keep the vehicles serviceable. All these "back room" duties, from cleaning the vehicles to overhauling their works, are now shared by women. Including those who work on the L.P.T.B. railways as porters, booking clerks, power house and boiler attendants, lamp changers, etc., the Board now employs some 13,000 women.

During the bad blitz period 1,000 women were employed to see to the feeding of the 100,000 people who nightly sought shelter in the London tubes. They worked in two shifts—an evening and a morning one—and were paid 6s. to 8s. a shift, working 6 shifts a week. This part of the Board's organization could be revived instantly at need.

The majority of the women in the service of the Board come from better-class factory jobs, but you may find a court dressmaker acting as a pipe-fitter's mate, a school teacher or a crooner as a conductor, a manageress of a teashop as a labourer, and so on.

Women on the Railways

Transport companies and local authorities all over the country are employing more and more women in jobs usually carried out by men. Forty-four Brighton trolley-bus women conductors recently set up a national record of regular attendance at work; absenteeism among them was less than one per cent. The main line railways too are employing women as porters, booking clerks, ticket collectors, cleaners, etc., in ever-increasing numbers. On the Southern Railway alone over 5,000 women were already engaged at the end of 1941 in place of men serving with the Forces.

The Home Office has more than once urged the appointment of more women police throughout the country, particularly in the neighbourhood of military establishments and munition works, where the presence of a helpful and sympathetic policewoman can often prevent disaster in the lives of thoughtless young women (and men). Some local authorities have listened to the Home Office's urgings—those usually which were enlightened enough to have women police before the war—but not nearly enough have responded. Candidates for work in the Metropolitan Police, which has always led the way in the employment of women, must be 24 to 35 years old, not less than 5 ft. 4 in. in their stockinged feet, and of sound sight out of doors without glasses. Pay during preliminary training (normally 11 weeks, reduced during the war to 4 weeks) is 40s. a week. Constables receive 56s. to 80s. a week, plus a war duty allowance of 2s. 6d. and a supplementary allowance of 7s. 6d.; sergeants receive up to 100s. a week, inspectors up to 145s. a week. The work of women police is advisory rather than repressive, and knowledge and understanding of human beings is an essential part of their equipment. Like the men of the police force, they are out in the blitz and in all conditions of weather.

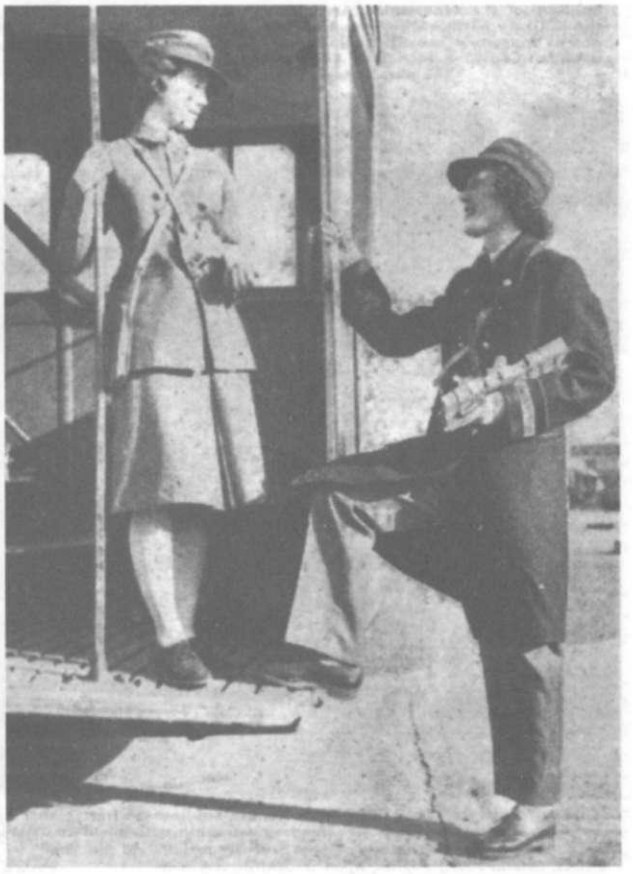
Many and Varied Tasks of the Women's Services

TRACKING DOWN PARASITES liable to destroy prized tomato plants, these experts in research are engaged in highly important work for the Women's Land Army. They are here seen, hard at work at their horticultural research station in Hertfordshire.

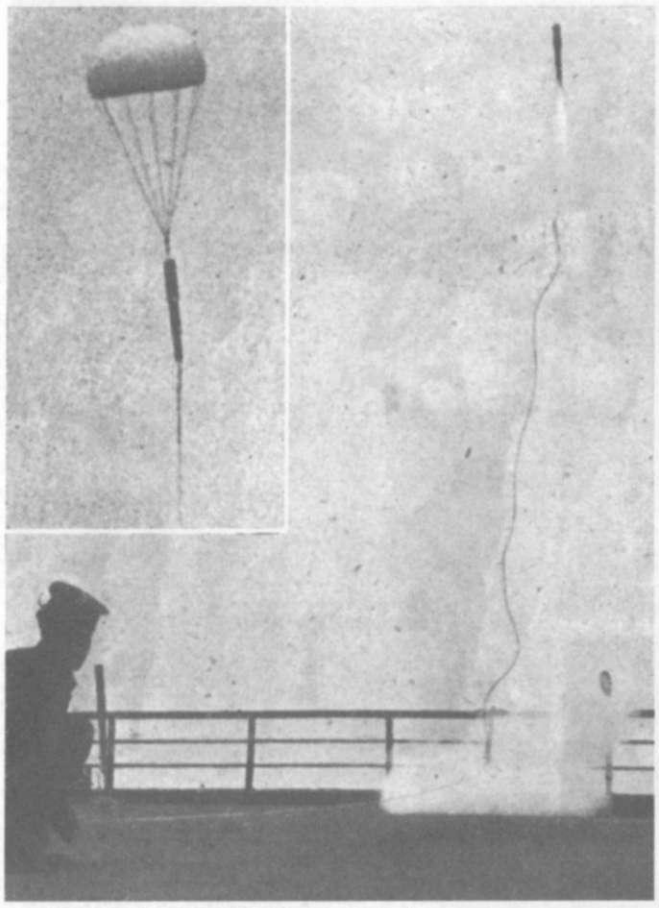
VARIED DUTIES undertaken by women include the familiar ones of nursing and public transport work. Above, a nurse assists convalescent soldiers to enjoy the sunshine in the grounds of a Military Hospital. Two types of uniform worn by London bus conductresses are seen below. The three-quarter coat and grey slacks worn by the girl on the right have now become the official costume as opposed to the more restricted coat and skirt.

N.A.A.F.I. GIRLS, above, are packing cakes into boxes at the central bakery of the command. These are to be dispatched to the many N.A.A.F.I. depots throughout the country. Over fifteen million cakes and pastries are made each year for the consumption of the forces.

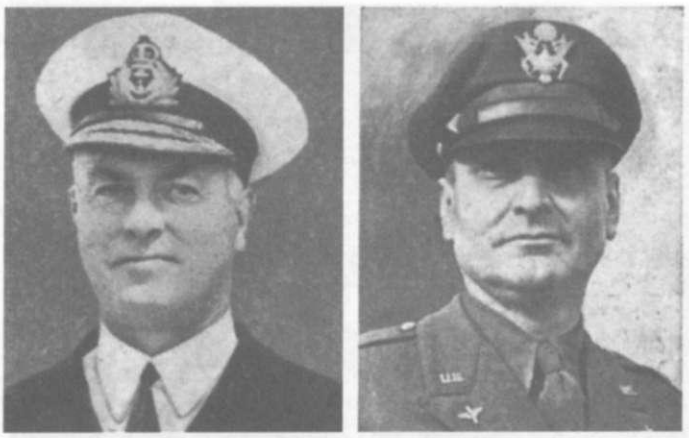
WOMEN'S AUXILIARY POLICE CORPS in the City of London was started in 1941, and has proved to be outstandingly successful. Duties include the driving of ambulances and clerical and canteen work. Here is a telephone operator. *Photos, Daily Mirror, Topical Press, Fox*



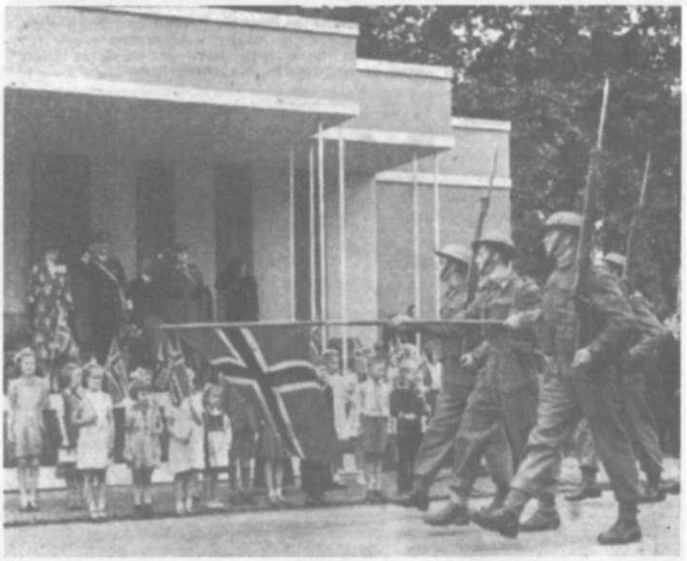
Our Roving Camera Ranges the Home Front



NEW A.A. ROCKET defends merchant ships against enemy dive bombers. The rocket apparatus shoots parachutes with long wires attached to them into the sky and unless the enemy pilot swerves instantly off his course his plane becomes entangled in the "wire barrage." Above, rocket is seen carrying the wire aloft. Inset, parachute trailing the wire.



RECENT APPOINTMENTS. Admiral Sir Charles Kennedy Purvis, left, took up his duties as Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and Deputy First Sea Lord early in August. He was recently C.-in-C. on the America and West Indies Station. Right, Brig.-Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Commander of the U.S. Bomber Force in Great Britain, who personally led its first raid on August 17, when Rouen was attacked by day.



Soldiers of the Norwegian Army (right) march past King Haakon at the military parade which formed part of the celebrations in London of His Majesty's seventieth birthday on August 3. The King stands between Crown Prince Olaf and Crown Princess Märtha of Norway. The parade took place in Hyde Park.

GATHERING IN THE HARVEST, these soldiers at first glance appear to be camouflaged. They are lending valuable assistance to a Berkshire farmer during one of the busiest periods of the year

Photos, Central Press, Topical, Sport & General, Keystone

I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

With the R.A.F. I Dropped Food Over Burma

Refugees from Burma were helped on their way by food supplies dropped by R.A.F. and U.S. airmen who flew through the monsoon on their errands of mercy. Here is the story told by The Daily Telegraph special correspondent, L. Marsland Gander, who accompanied them on one trip.

STARTING from Calcutta in a big transport plane we flew through cloud and sunshine. Everything was dripping, including our sweating faces. Just before the take-off an air-raid alert caused droves of fighters to take the air, while our crew was on the ground eating ice-cream.

Nothing developed from the alarm. We took off and followed the red-brown snake of the Hooghly River, dotted with boats with square green sails. In a short time we were flying over immense tracts of flooded countryside. Villages and clumps of trees were made forlorn little islands, and great rivers spread formlessly over forest and rice-fields.

From time to time we plunged into clouds, hail lashed us like bullets, and our great wings quivered. Several hours later we were over the trim tea gardens of Assam. We came down from the cool heights to the steaming heat of this aerodrome.

Early next morning I boarded another transport from which the door had been removed, for the first food-dropping trip of the day. While I sat on a pile of sacks containing a ton of food and clothing, our pilot, a flight-lieutenant from Wicklow, Eire, pointed out our destination on a map. The weather having temporarily improved, we were headed for one of the most difficult places, where low cloud would make navigation impossible.

Down the centre of the plane ran a steel wire to which the crew attached themselves with safety lines. An aircraftman, formerly a London lorry driver, stood with his hand jocularly on the wire like a bus conductor about to ring the bell.

We took off towards the distant hills, keeping a sharp look-out for Japanese fighters, which have, however, been very quiet lately. A flight sergeant, an ex-manager of a Manchester store, who has been on 45 bombing raids in Europe and the Middle East, described to me the contents of the bundles. There were rice meal, tinned meat, towels, soap, stockings, sandals, tea, sugar and a big parcel of books.

He told me that the party we were seeking had on the previous day spelt out with bully beef tins the message : "Thousand starving." He recalled that the piece de résistance of their food-dropping was a barrel of rum, sent down on two parachutes.

Now we were 8,000 ft. up over rugged hills covered to the summits with dark-green jungle. In all directions they extended endlessly, ridge on ridge, while here and there mysterious peaks poked through billowing cotton-wool.

In the dust-filled cabin the crew put on goggles and handkerchiefs over their heads and mouths as we neared our destination. Diving through a cloud ceiling, we began to spiral down in a bowl of mountains till, less than 600 ft. below, I saw a camp of bamboo huts in a clearing on a hilltop.

I caught a glimpse of a message in bully beef tins : " Drop food and drugs."

Then began a series of tricky " bombing runs " over the target. We had no parachutes. The method adopted was simply to stack up half a dozen sacks in the open doorway. An aircraftman, a former Cambridge farm labourer, braced his back against the cabin wall, and, on a light signal from the pilot, pushed the sacks out with his feet. With others I heaved and sweated at the sacks in a choking cloud of dust, and saw them whizzing down through space mostly well within the target area.

I saw several Indians staring upwards, oblivious of the danger from these 30-lb. sacks that went smashing down, sometimes crashing through the roof of huts. To them it was manna from Heaven. Nine times we flew over the camp and pushed out sacks. The figures below rushing to recover them seemed so close that I fancied a lasso could have hoisted them on board to safety, yet they were marooned by a flooded river.

The South African group captain who made the flight with us pointed out landmarks in this wild country. Finding and feeding these lost parties is temporarily his biggest task. He is fighting the monsoon more than the Japanese. There are rescue parties with elephants threading through the jungles who also have to be located and fed. Dumps are being formed. When there is a break in the monsoon the food planes fly from dawn till dusk. On one camp we visited seven tons of food were dropped in a few days.

At Night With My Tank in the Western Desert

The following description of a tanks' battlefield by night, when the supply lorries bring up petrol, water and food, and the tanks are serviced ready for the next day's fighting, was given in a letter from a British tank officer serving in Libya, which appeared in The Daily Telegraph.

WE had been fighting hard all the afternoon, and the going had been particularly stiff. In the lulls we watched the sun—as one always does, trying to will the thing down towards the horizon. How slowly it moves ! But at last it touches the horizon and twilight falls.

With darkness we can no longer clearly distinguish our target ; further firing is just a waste of ammunition. Suddenly we feel utterly weary as tensed nerves relax ; also we feel a great relief that makes many pray, for we have been reprieved for another day.

Over the air comes the voice of the colonel, telling us to rally to a given light signal. Up soars a light, and we take a bearing on it and move towards it. All around us sound the throb of engines and creak of tracks. Other troops loom up in the gloom, recognize us and fall into their allotted places until the regiment is moving through the darkness in two long lines.

The gunner and the loader doze, exhausted, their faces coppery black with fumes. The driver strains to see the tank ahead, for there are no lights. He is the hero of every tank ; on his mechanical skill our lives depend. He alone can do nothing to hit back, can make no decisions. He can only watch and wait for orders.

Out of the gloom looms another column, silent compared with the boom of our huge engines ; our transport has arrived. It bears petrol, oil, water and food ; perhaps rum tonight. With it come the fitters and medical stores. Often there are wounded men lying on the backs of tanks, where they can be stretched out and kept warm over the engine.

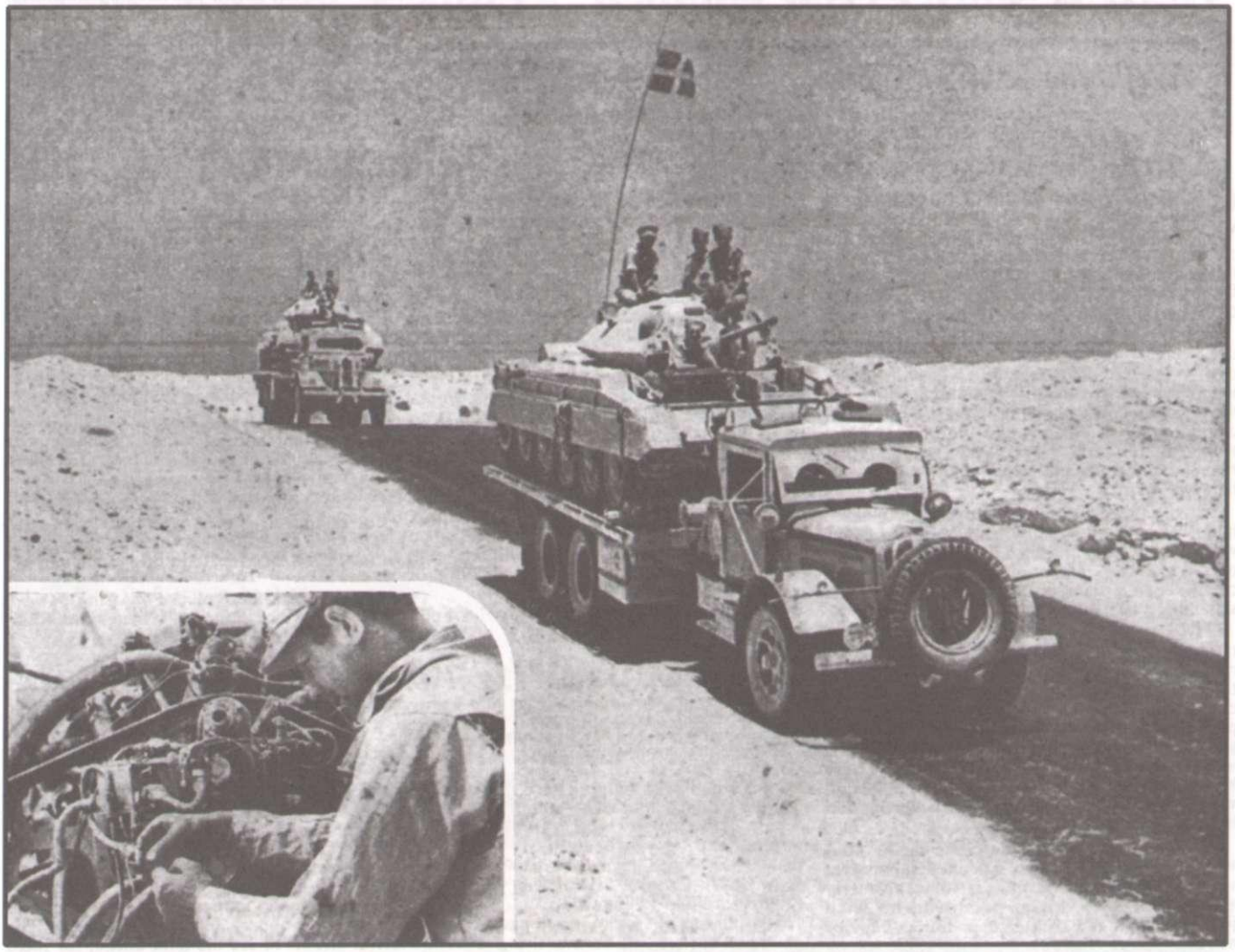
Here and there fires blaze from burning tanks and lorries—relics of the day's struggle—and sometimes we have to make a small detour to avoid being illuminated by them.

Clusters of white illuminating lights rise at different points around us ; these are the Germans. It is no use going after them, as they are probably on the move, too. We should never find them, we might give away our position, and one can see little through the sights at night. There is no " gentleman's agreement " ; we should attack them if we could.

At last we halt and move into our protective formation around the " soft " vehicles—the lorries. The gunner and loader have to be shaken.

Discipline tells, and we move briskly. The driver tells his commander his petrol and oil requirements ; the gunner tells how much two-pounder and Besa ammunition he needs. The commander tells his squadron leader. Guns are cleaned and the tank is maintained. No matter how weary we may be, there is one tradition which will not be broken : the tank will be made mechanically perfect before

THROUGH THE BURMESE JUNGLE plodded refugees during the great retreat of May, 1942. This photograph, taken by a Daily Express correspondent who escaped safely to Assam, shows a line of Naga bearers who carried the party's baggage. The journey of 130 miles took seven days and led them over mountain ranges up to heights of 4,000 feet. *Photo exclusive to* THE WAR ILLUSTRATED



TANK MAINTENANCE is of the utmost importance in desert warfare and, as described in the text, it is the nightly duty of the crew, however weary, to see to their charge and make it ready for the morning before themselves seeking rest. But sometimes more than routine servicing is necessary, and this work is carried out by the Light Recovery Section of the Ordnance Corps. Above are seen two transporters, each with its Cruiser tank, which are being returned to the forward areas after re-conditioning. Inset, a mechanic overhauls a tank engine. *Photos, British Official*

dawn, the tank will be full of petrol and ammunition, and the tank will be spotlessly clean inside ; then some of us may rest.

The supply lorries move along the line, dumping our exact requirements. They have been following behind us as we fought throughout the day. They have been dive-bombed, they have been machine-gunned, they have been shelled—they have no armour. They will finish after midnight, and will rise long before dawn. Then they will go to their rendezvous with the R.A.S.C. and do the whole thing again. Those are the men who form our lifeline, the men of our regiment, our "echelon."

We heave up the heavy petrol tins, the five-gallon drums of oil, and the boxes of ammunition. We draw our rations and pack everything away ; and all the time the bitter wind is blowing. We cannot make tea, we cannot cook or even smoke, for we must not show a light.

The squadron sergeant-major comes along. He plods up the line, not very straight, for he is deadly tired. He has done his full share of work in his tank, he has reported to his squadron leader, and now he brings the orders round. One man per tank for guard. An hour and a quarter per weary man, and we have only five hours for sleep tonight. All members of the crew do guard in turn. Tonight it is the loader, and he will be called at half-past two by the man from the next tank. He will listen for the slightest sound that might mean the approach of an enemy laager-raiding party. It is anxious work.

We train the guns outwards, and they are left loaded and cocked. Then we haul the tarpaulins off the backs of the tanks. On those we spread our blankets and roll our greatcoats for pillows. We fold the other half of the tarpaulin back over the beds to keep off frost and dew, place loaded revolvers handy and crawl under the blankets.

It seems but a moment before we hear our unhappy loader called to do his guard, and but another moment before the hum of engines tell us that the echelons are moving out to refill. It is still dark when a sentry shakes us. We roll our blankets and pack them and stow the tarpaulins. We are quivering with cold and filled with dread anticipation. We wait for orders.

A voice yells "Start up," and almost immediately engines roar. It is a relief to have something to do. In a few minutes engines are warm. A pale streak on the horizon shows the dawn and tanks cautiously move out, just a little way. As the light increases they will move farther and farther until they command a view of the surrounding desert, and there they will await operational orders. If we are lucky they will wait long enough to prepare a hot breakfast.

We Were the R.A.F.'s Rearguard in Libya

The story of the rearguard action fought in the Western Desert by the Allied Air Forces, and of their final retirement from their landing ground almost under the noses of German tanks is told here by an R.A.F. officer.

We were standing on the landing ground when the bombers returned from their last raid. It was nothing but an arid stretch of desert—a few tents and a thick cloud of dust kicked up by the constant take-off. All around were grouped the air crews, grimy and dust-covered from days of continuous fighting, but still cheerful.

Then the Bostons came back. They had been gone only a few minutes but their bomb racks were empty. The nearest column of tanks, they reported, was only about five minutes' flying time away. It might be on the landing ground within an hour or so. Everybody knew that the withdrawal could not be longer postponed. Lorries took on board tents and the ground crews. The convoys of trucks formed up and moved quietly on across the desert. The air crews climbed into their Bostons and took off.

At the nearest fighter landing ground the squadrons were still up patrolling over the enemy columns only a few miles from their base. They flew and fought till nightfall.

Then the drama transferred itself to the dug-out which served as the fighter operations room on the landing ground. From time to time news of the enemy tank movements came in on the telephone. Outside in the cool quietness of the desert evening the fighters and bombers alike were dispersed

around the aerodrome. All tents had been struck and piled on lorries ready to move off at short notice. Everybody slept out in the slit trenches or on the open ground.

The news that came in over the telephone was not reassuring. The nearest enemy tanks were only 15 miles away. At midnight they were being engaged by the Free French. An hour later the German tanks had been driven a little north on to Gambut aerodrome. At 2 a.m. they had been driven from there and nobody knew where they had gone in the darkness. The moon had set. It was said they had turned to the north-east towards us.

Messengers were sent round the camp shaking sleeping men by the shoulder and telling them to be ready to move off at first light. The hour before dawn was the most anxious, for the fighters and bombers still stood on the aerodrome and the German tank column still hovered somewhere near. We were gathered in the last tent left standing, drinking hot tea from a dixie and chewing bacon and sausage sandwiches to the light of a single hurricane lamp. The field telephone was still ringing with orders to get rid of any surplus aviation petrol, to demolish aircraft that were useless and could no longer fly.

Then it was light, and the shapes of the waiting aircraft gradually formed from the dimness of the landing ground. It was a magnificent sunrise. The trucks formed up into convoy. Two columns of black smoke rose into the air from where two useless aircraft had been fired. Then the squadrons began to take off.

It had been worth it. They had risked staying almost in the front line, so as to be able to strike at the enemy until the last moment. They had been within easy striking distance of the tanks. But now it was light the aircraft were away. The whole force had fought until the last moment and been withdrawn in safety. That was something of a triumph.

S.A.A.F. SQUADRON, serving with the R.A.F. in the Middle East, all packed up and ready to move to another desert landing-ground. Sudden removals such as this are frequently necessary in Western Desert warfare and the efficiency with which they are effected is well described in this page.
Photo, British Official

They circled the landing ground and headed towards the desert tracks to cover the withdrawal of the ground forces. We climbed into our trucks and rumbled slowly after them. All day it was just a steady trek across the desert, lines of trucks, everywhere choking dust, maps and compasses to study, cans of bully-beef for lunch, and a brew of hot coffee that the padre made on a fire of camel-thorn twigs. Overhead swept the fighters on patrol and never a German aircraft came near us.

By evening we were at the new landing grounds and the whole force was re-formed. The withdrawal was done without fuss, hurry or concern. We came back steadily and brought all our gear with us. Within twelve hours the fighters were fully equipped to fight again and the bombers to recommence their raids.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

AUGUST 5, 1942, Wednesday *1,068th day*

Air.—R.A.F. bombers raided targets in the Ruhr by night.

Russian Front.—Further German gains at Kotelnikovo, on Stalingrad-Krasnodar railway, and east of Tsimlyanskaya; fighting continued south of Byelaya Glina and Kushchevsk.

Mediterranean.—British submarine sank Italian supply ship and damaged another.

China.—American bombers attacked Jap installations near Hankow.

AUGUST 6, Thursday *1,069th day*

Air.—Strong force of R.A.F. bombers raided Duisburg.

Russian Front.—Russians made further withdrawals at Kotelnikovo and Byelaya Glina. At Rzhev Russians gained ground.

Africa.—Land activity confined to artillery exchanges. U.S. Army Air Force bombers raided Tobruk.

China.—American bombers attacked Jap aerodrome at Tienho, near Canton.

Australasia.—Japs announced that their units had occupied the Kei, Aru and Tenimber islands between Timor and New Guinea. Allied bombers started day and night raids on Jap bases in New Guinea and the Solomons.

AUGUST 7, Friday *1,070th day*

Russian Front.—German drive to Caucasus continued; Russians withdrew in direction of Armavir. In Stalingrad region fighting continued at Kletskaya and Kotelnikovo.

Australasia.—American and Australian forces started offensive operations against the Tulagi region of the Solomon Islands.

Home.—Sharp attack on East Anglian town in the early hours.

AUGUST 8, Saturday *1,071st day*

Russian Front.—Fierce fighting in area of Armavir in Caucasus, and Kotelnikovo and Kletskaya in Stalingrad region.

China.—U.S. bombers raided aerodrome and docks at Canton.

Australasia.—In Solomon Islands operations, a Jap force of cruisers and destroyers was driven off by U.S. naval units during the night of August 8-9.

U.S.A.—A Task Force of the U.S. Pacific Fleet heavily bombarded Jap ships and shore installations at Kiska, Aleutians.

General.—Indian Congress Party resolution demanded British withdrawal from India and threatened campaign of civil disobedience.

AUGUST 9, Sunday *1,072nd day*

Air.—Strong force of R.A.F. bombers raided Osnabrück.

Russian Front.—Germans claimed capture of Maikop and Krasnodar. Round Stalingrad Russians continued to put up strong resistance.

Africa.—U.S. Army Air Force heavy bombers made daylight raid on Benghazi.

Burma.—R.A.F. attacked Jap bases in N.W. Burma.

China.—U.S. bombers and fighters raided Haiphong in Indo-China.

Australasia.—Allied bombers made day and night raids on Rabaul, Gasmata, Salamaua and Kokoda.

U.S.A.—American navy patrol planes attacked Jap ships in Kiska harbour.

General.—Mr. Gandhi and leaders of Congress Party arrested.

AUGUST 10, Monday *1,073rd day*

Russian Front.—Fighting continued round Armavir, Krasnodar and Maikop; Germans claimed capture of Piatigorsk. In the Don bend Russians countered many attacks.

China.—American Army Air Force bombers made low-level attack on Hankow.

Australasia.—Allied bombers continued raids on New Guinea and attacked Jap shipping off Timor.

General.—German authorities announced that 93 persons had been executed in different parts of France as reprisals for attacks on Germans.

AUGUST 11, Tuesday *1,074th day*

Air.—Strong force of R.A.F. bombers attacked Mainz; Coblenz and Le Havre also raided. 16 bombers missing.

Russian Front.—German advance in Caucasus continued, with fighting at Cherkessk, Krasnodar and Maikop.

Mediterranean.—H.M.S. Eagle (aircraft carrier) lost as result of U-boat attack while escorting convoy to Malta American heavy bombers attacked enemy cruisers in Navarino Bay, Greece.

China.—American fighter aircraft bombed Jap aerodrome at Nanchang.

Home.—Sharp raid on S.E. coast town.

AUGUST 12, Wednesday *1,075th day*

Sea.—Free French H.Q. announced loss of submarine-chaser Reine.

Air.—Mainz again bombed by strong force. U.S. Army Air Force fighters took part in sorties over English Channel.

Russian Front.—Caucasus fighting continued round Maikop and Krasnodar; Russians withdrew in Cherkessk region. German attacks held round Stalingrad.

Mediterranean.—During passage of convoy to Malta H.M.S. Manchester (cruiser) was damaged by torpedo or mine, and subsequently sank. R.A.F. attacked aerodrome at Calato, Rhodes.

Africa.—Allied bombers attacked Tobruk and Sollum.

Australasia.—U.S. Marines consolidating their positions in three islands in vicinity of Tulagi. Flying Fortresses made daylight raid on Rabaul harbour.

General.—Mr. Churchill and Mr. Averell Harriman arrived in Moscow for discussions with Mr. Stalin.

AUGUST 13, Thursday *1,076th day*

Sea.—Russian warships sank enemy submarine in Gulf of Finland and three transports in the Barents Sea.

Air.—U.S. Army Air Force fighter squadrons again took part in operations over the Channel and Northern France.

Russian Front.—Fighting in Caucasus spread to Mineralniye Vody, E. of Armavir. At Kotelnikovo the Russians counter-attacked.

Mediterranean.—British naval squadron under Admiral Vian shelled Rhodes.

Australasia.—Allied bombers made daylight attacks on Jap convoy off New Guinea.

AUGUST 14, Friday *1,077th day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced that convoy had reached Malta despite attacks by U-boats, E-boats, and aircraft.

Russian Front.—Fighting continued round Mineralniye Vody, Maikop, and Krasnodar, where the defences were penetrated. On Stalingrad front Russians counter-attacked.

AUGUST 15, Saturday *1,078th day*

Air.—R.A.F. bombers raided western Germany in bad weather conditions.

Russian Front.—Fighting in Caucasus round Cherkessk, Mineralniye Vody, Krasnodar and Maikop.

Africa.—Our bombers raided Mersa Matruh, Tobruk, and Sollum.

Australasia.—Allied bombers attacked Jap installations on Timor. Enemy pressure increased in Papua.

General.—Five Dutchmen held as hostages for attack on German military train were executed.

AUGUST 16, Sunday *1,079th day*

Air.—U.S. Army Air Force fighters again took part in sweeps.

Russian Front.—Evacuation of Maikop announced by Russians. On Stalingrad front Germans made some progress.

Australasia.—Allied bombers attacked Jap base at Timor. In New Guinea Japs occupied Kokoda airfield.

General.—Mr. Churchill left Moscow

AUGUST 17, Monday *1,080th day*

Air.—U.S. Army Air Force Flying Fortresses raided railway marshalling-yards at Rouen by daylight. R.A.F. bombed Osnabrück by night.

Russian Front.—Heavy enemy attacks at Mineralniye Vody; in area of Krasnodar the Germans forced crossing of Kuban R.

Australasia.—Jap bombers caused damage and casualties in heavy raid on aerodrome near Port Moresby.

General.—Brazilian Government announced sinking of five ships, including army transport, by Axis submarines.

AUGUST 18, Tuesday *1,081st day*

Air.—R.A.F. bombers raided submarine yards at Flensburg. Soviet bombers raided Danzig, Königsberg and Tilsit.

Russian Front.—Fierce German attacks in area of Krasnodar and Piatigorsk; slight Russian withdrawal near Stalingrad.

Mediterranean.—Admiralty announced that other ships lost in convoy action were anti-aircraft cruiser Cairo and destroyer Foresight.

General.—Announced that on his way to Moscow Mr. Churchill visited Cairo and the front at El Alamein.

Brazilian ships on high seas ordered back to port and coastal sailings cancelled.

Editor's Postscript

ONE of the most pleasantly profitable hours that I spend every week is devoted to the News Theatre, and many times I feel that the entertainment and instruction to be had in one of these is vastly better value for money than some of the over-praised full-length films I have recently seen. But as the lion's share in the programmes at the News Theatres is nearly always supplied from America, there is, I think, some danger of our English speech and native idiom being overlaid by Americanisms, not all which are worthy of acceptance. Some of the commentaries spoken by Americans strike so dreadfully on the English ear that one's sense of hearing rejoices in passing from one of these too American sound tracks to the purer and more agreeable speech from the lips of Leslie Mitchell, Stuart Hibbert, or other of the B.B.C. announcers whose voices are occasionally used by British film makers.

MY spirits always fall when I see a travel piece from America announced, for while I know that its photography will be impeccable, I also know that I am going to listen to the most banal comments in the least attractive phraseology, with one dreadful word recurring like the leitmotif in a more tuneful sort of composition. That word is pronounced and repeated four or five times in a five-minute film as "cullaful." The word in itself is not offensive if its use is occasional, but in America it almost rivals "wonnerful" as a sound expressing an idea for which the speaker has not a sufficient vocabulary. I could write at length on this important topic if paper were more plentiful, as I heard an American commentator in presenting a quite admirable film the other night twice use the unknown word "momento," which I took as a mispronunciation of "memento," and I just can't let that go without mention.

I THINK it is incumbent on all English school teachers to warn their children against having their speech corrupted by many of the sounds that accompany American films, and it might be a good exercise to get young people to note down any of the peculiar expressions they hear and report them at school for the teacher's opinion of their use. Incidentally, I have just had a letter from a reader suggesting that it would be worth while issuing a booklet of American phrases on the lines on which I dealt with French and Norwegian in the earlier numbers of THE WAR ILLUSTRATED. Sincerely as I admire the Americans and American institutions (always excepting gangsterism) I do not favour the interlarding of our English speech with Americanisms; but the student who is curious about these matters is already well supplied in American Usage, edited by Mr. H. W. Horwill and issued in similar form to Fowler's English Usage, by the Oxford University Press.

ABOUT forty years ago, when the War Gods were asleep and the London evening papers had to resort to stunts to hoist their circulations, a singularly stupid device was to employ some celebrity to "edit" the paper for one day—or it may have been one week—and the inimitable Dan Leno was chosen to displace the editor of The Sun. I recalled this today in having had rather an overdose of querulous criticism in our evening sheets, which are now reduced to the dimensions of the ha'penny press of forty years ago. For Dan put up an excellent show with the first (it may have been the only) number of the luminary he edited. His leading article was entitled "Whither are we Withering?" It was a joyous farrago of nonsense and was so characteristic that I think he actually composed it himself. As a constructive criticism of our war effort I have little doubt it would bear reprinting today alongside much of the stuff which amateur strategists and excitable Second Fronters are getting into type.

MAJ.-GEN. MARK WAYNE CLARK, Commander of the U.S. Ground Forces in the European theatre of operations, has his headquarters in England. He is 46 years of age and was formerly Chief of Staff of Army Ground Forces at Washington.
Photo, Associated Press

THE scene, as described to me, a roof refreshment place in the West End whence an impressive view of the multitudinous barrage balloons can be obtained. An American military officer having a drink with an English friend. American: "Is this the sort of weather you usually have in August?" His English friend: "Oh dear, no. It's sometimes worse, but not often, and you must remember you're from California." American ("looking lazy" at the balloons): "Well, I can't help saying it's a helluva climate and you might do worse than cut down these balloons and let the whole darn place sink." The spirit of Mark Twain still inspires the humour of his countrymen.

MORE than two years ago I wrote a paragraph or two about the dishonesty which persists in the human race despite all the moralists and teachers and policemen throughout the Christian era. The occasion was my being informed by a railway director that the average number of hand towels stolen from Pullman car lavatories on his own line every year was fifty thousand. I have just read in my evening paper that the total number of such towels stolen from all the lavatories on the railways of the United Kingdom during the last twelve months was one million! My friend the director was evidently not overstating the pilferings on his own line, as a total on the same ratio for the whole railway system of the country would work out at only three hundred thousand! So it may be that in wartime thieving is done in triplicate like the forms of the bureaucrats. The stealing of a million hand towels involves a considerable proportion of one's fellow countrymen, unless it be that we owe it to a few only who, having started it as a hobby, may have made it a profession. Result: no more towels will be provided in train lavatories, excepting a few only in "sleepers."

WASPS have never been favourites of mine, or yours, I'll warrant. We're having a plague of them this autumn down in Sussex. But we are also having another plague: the Large White butterfly. And the wasps held my attention for a good half-hour after lunch yesterday while I watched them chasing and killing Large Whites! Seven or eight of these butterfly pests were accounted for in that time. The butterfly, like an insect bomber compared to a wasp, was pounced upon in flight by his fighter foe and brought crashing to the ground, where the victor made fairly short work of his prey by eating its head off! The game also gave me excellent opportunities for killing the wasps, which I did not neglect; but I felt some slight compunction when I realized for the first time that these unpleasant insects were doing a good job in thinning out the Large Whites, for they are the butterflies who devastate our cabbage patches.

"PERSONALLY I would rather miss a meal than miss my WAR ILLUSTRATED, and consequently I dare not say too much to my newsagent about the reprehensible practice of writing customers' names and addresses on the front page, concerning which I have complained many times, but so far to no purpose." This is a quotation from a letter received by me the other day from a Leeds subscriber, and while I do not wish to keep recurring to this topic, in quoting the foregoing I would repeat that with very little extra trouble in making their deliveries the newsagents could avoid this disfigurement of copies which are intended to be handled with unusual care and in many thousands of cases to be preserved for binding purposes. A list of the names and addresses of his regular subscribers to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED could be given to the messengers who distribute them. And with this aid to memory it should be possible to put each number into the hands of its purchaser without making the publication itself the guide to his address. As a class the agents are usually anxious and willing to cooperate, and any who take advantage of short supplies to adopt a "take it or leave it" attitude, are only the exceptions that prove the rule.

Printed in England and published every alternate Friday by the Proprietors, THE AMALGAMATED PRESS, LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. September 4, 1942. S.S. *Editorial Address:* JOHN CARPENTER HOUSE, WHITEFRIARS, LONDON, E.C.4.